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Oriental supervisor for bribery

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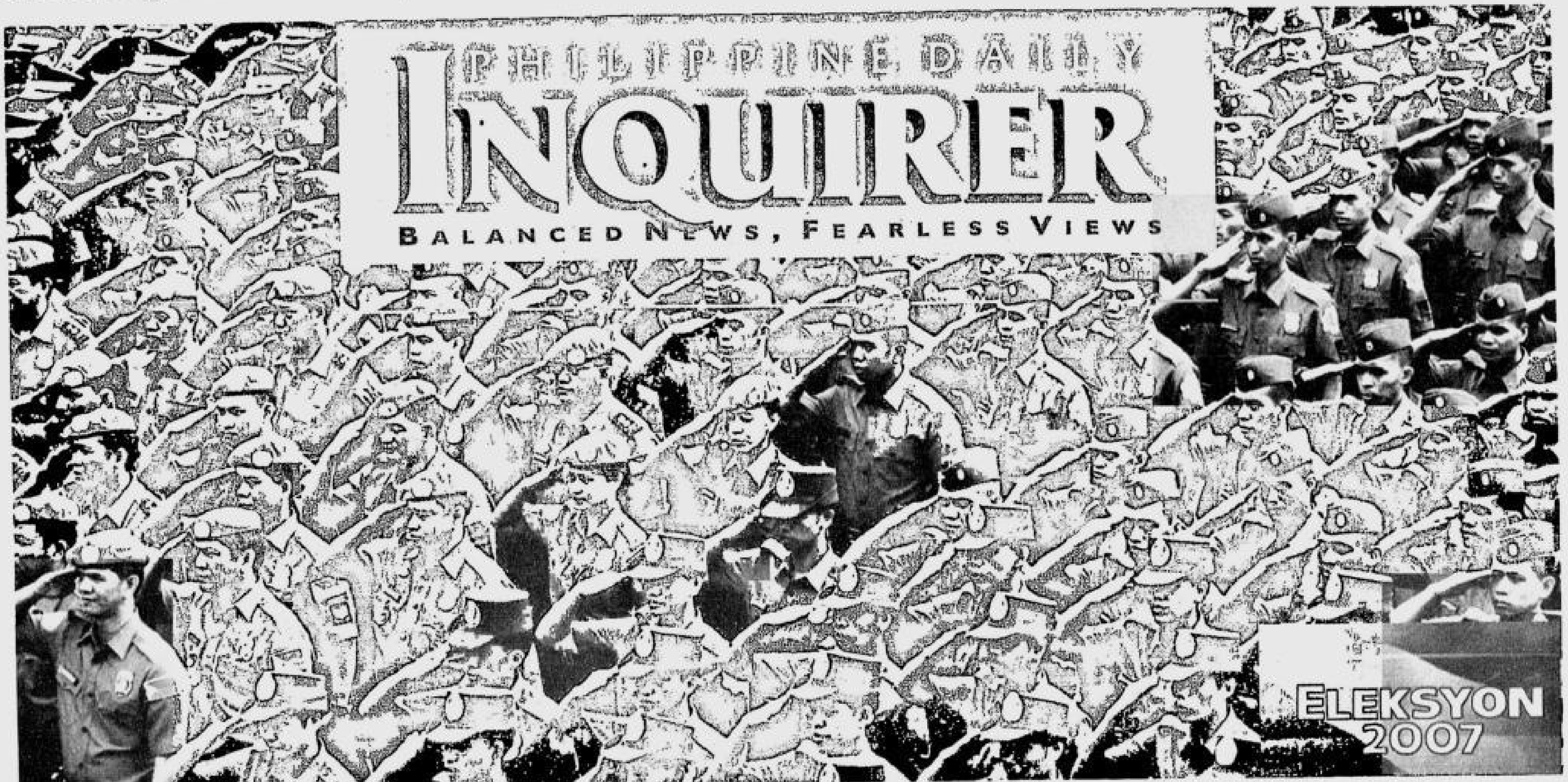
Bush on Iraq war funds

SAT. SPECIAL / H4
On the road with
Kiko-Sharon caravan

PHILIPPINE DAILY
INQUIRER
BALANCED NEWS, FEARLESS VIEWS



SHOW OF FORCE: Policemen get their marching orders for clean, orderly elections on May 14 during send-off ceremonies at Camp Crame on Friday. The Philippine National Police is now on full alert. The National Capital Region Police Office will deploy a total of 8,735 policemen throughout Metro Manila. *(Story on Page A2.)*

JOAN BONDOC

Only one Cayetano now

Comelec disqualifies Joselito Pepito Cayetano

By Nikko Dizon

THE GENUINE OPPOSITION'S ALAN PETER CAYETANO can heave a sigh of relief with the Commission on Elections finally disqualifying Joselito Pepito Cayetano from the senatorial race.

In a six-page resolution issued last night, the Comelec en banc said Joselito Cayetano of the Kilusang Bagong Lipunan had mocked the election process by adopting the nickname "Peter" for his candidacy.

The Comelec en banc upheld the decision of its first division declaring Joselito Cayetano a nuisance candidate and effectively cancelled his certificate of candidacy.

It also ordered his name stricken off the official list of senatorial candidates.

By adopting the nickname "by which [he] is not actually known and considering that his true family name and that of petitioner is 'Cayetano,' there is a clear attempt on [Joselito's] part to put the election process in mockery or disrepute or to cause confusion among voters," the poll body said.

"We find no sufficient reason to disturb the meticulous finding of facts by the [first division]," it said.

Alan Peter Cayetano's lawyer, Leila de Lima, said that while "we're happy" about the Comelec resolution, it came "too close to Election Day."

"There might not be sufficient time for

ONLY ONE/ A22

After a century, political clan still rules

By Inquirer Northern Luzon and Inquirer Central Luzon

THE MOST ENDURING POLITICAL clans in Northern and Central Luzon are once again testing their strength in this year's local elections.

Among the top political families in these regions, the Ortegas of La Union, the Josons of Nueva Ecija and Dys of Isabela are fielding at least four or more family members in Monday's polls.

Most of these families are also known allies of the Arroyo administration.

- ORTEGAS OF LA UNION

The Ortegas have been around for more than a century. Members of the clan have held various positions in La Union since 1901, when American colonial rulers appointed patriarch Joaquin

AFTER/ A22

SWS POLL

ABC classes pick Escudero; D, E crowds go for Legarda

EDUCATION AND SOCIOECONOMIC class do matter in how voters choose their candidates.

Sorsogon Rep. Francis Escudero is the senatorial candidate of choice among respondents with a college education and from the top ABC classes, according to a recent Social Weather Stations voter preference survey.

But for respondents with a high-school education and coming from classes D and E, the No. 1 choice was Loren Legarda, Escudero's teammate in the Genuine Opposition ticket.

The questionnaire on voting preferences by education and class was part of the final pre-election survey that the

ABC CLASSES/ A23

Kids starring in Senate bets' final TV ads

By Nestor U. Torre

COMMENTARY

WITH ELECTION DAY NIGH, SENATORIAL candidates are revving up their TV spots or running new ones.

What accounts for the change of pace and focus, which must have been expensive to pull off? More important, how effective are the new spots in capping the candidates' campaigns?

We surveyed some 20 candidates' latest spots and came up with these observations:

In general, the new spots don't appear to be worth the extra expense involved except for their freshness or "summing up" aspects. Most of them pretty much repeat the old thematic pitches in slightly different terms. The resulting freshness is a positive factor, but arguably not a major one.

As for the impact of the "summing up"

KIDS STARRING/ A6

Indonesian terror suspect eludes arrest; 4 kids found

By Julie S. Alipala
Inquirer Mindanao

ZAMBOANGA CITY—FOR WEEKS, they trailed him from one island to another. But when the troops finally moved in yesterday, the man they suspected to be one of Southeast Asia's most wanted terrorists was gone.

The soldiers did not exactly come out empty-handed. They got four minors—aged 2, 5, 7 and 9—who they said were the children of Indonesian bombmaker Dulmatin.

One suspected terrorist was also arrested in the raid of the house in Tawi-Tawi. Two caretakers, sisters Nursitti and Kilsit-

INDONESIAN/ A17

RUEL PINE/WORLD WIDE FUND

IT'S PEAK SEASON for butanding sightings (whale sharks) in the World's Whale Shark Capital, Donsol in Sorsogon, and the youths of the town in whale shark costumes celebrate.

Butanding 'God's gift to Donsol'

By Gregg Yan
Contributor

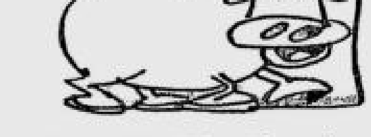
OUR GUIDE'S EYES TRAIN ON the playful undulations of the water and prays to the sea for signs: A looming shadow, a large ripple, sea froth that shouldn't be so.

We have been at sea a mere 15 minutes. Expectations run high. Yesterday, the interactions were many, the stories superb.

"There!" points Lino, our Butanding Interaction Officer (BIO).

Though slightly distorted by the motion of the bay's waves, a massive yet graceful form draws near our suddenly tiny craft. Cheers abound as mask and fins are donned. In a few moments,

BUTANDING/ A10


MAS MASAYA ANG KULELAT SA NAKAKULONG.!

Chavit: Whether I win or lose, Erap will still be in jail

By Leoncio Balbin Jr.
Inquirer Northern Luzon

VIGAN CITY—LOOK WHO'S GLOATING now.

"Erap will still be in jail whether I win or lose," said Team Unity senatorial candidate Luis "Chavit" Singson of his erstwhile friend and gambling buddy, ousted President Joseph Estrada.

He said Estrada should not gloat over

CHAVIT/ A10

Sandigan lets Danding sell disputed P6-B SMC shares

By Jocelyn R. Uy, Elizabeth Sanchez and Daxim L. Lucas

THE SANDIGANBAYAN ANTI-GRAFT court has allowed business tycoon Eduardo Cojuangco Jr. to sell about P6 billion worth of disputed San Miguel Corp. shares in the food and beverage giant believed to be illegally acquired with coco levy funds.

But Cojuangco, the SMC chair, cannot keep the proceeds for himself and he has to inform the court who the buyers of the shares will be.

The court's First Division yesterday gave Cojuangco the go-signal to sell 56,581,813 Class B shares of SMC in the name of 11 corporations that he owns to pay loans owed to the United Coconut Planters Bank and the Bank of Commerce (BOC).

The SMC shares are part of the original 20 percent block of SMC shares held by Cojuangco and 44 Cojuangco-owned companies which the government still claims on the grounds that they were bought with funds from a forced tax collected from small coconut farmers by the late dictator Ferdinand Marcos.

Yesterday's ruling was another setback for the government on the disputed block of shares. In 1998, the Sandiganbayan allowed Cojuangco and his companies to vote the shares. In 2003, the anti-graft court lifted the sequestration order on the 20 percent stake although

SANDIGAN/ A17

EZ2 | **FOUR DIGIT**
17 16 | 9 8 3 8

Mid-Day **SUERTRES** Evening
4 9 4 | 9 2 1
(All in exact order)

MEGALOTTO 6/45
14 17 20 21 25 39
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Second FRONT PAGE

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WEATHER FORECAST

FORECAST: Luzon will experience mostly cloudy skies with scattered rainshowers and isolated thunderstorms while Western sections of Visayas and Mindanao will have mostly cloudy skies with scattered rainshowers and thunderstorms. The rest of the country will be partly cloudy to cloudy with isolated rainshowers or thunderstorms.

Metro Manila	Cloudy with Rains	Iloilo/Bacolod	Cloudy with Rains
Baguio	Cloudy with Rains	Roxas	Cloudy with Rains
Tuguegarao	Cloudy with Rains	Cebu	Partly Cloudy
Laoag	Cloudy with Rains	Tacloban	Partly Cloudy
Clark Zone	Cloudy with Rains	Gen. Santos	Cloudy with Rains
Tagaytay	Cloudy with Rains	Zamboanga	Cloudy with Rains
Legaspi	Cloudy with Rains	Cagayan de Oro	Partly Cloudy
Calapan	Cloudy with Rains	Davao	Partly Cloudy

COMPILED BY KATE PEDROSO, INQUIRER RESEARCH/05/11/07 SOURCE PAGASA

Army's 56th IB commander suspended

By Christine O. Avendaño

A BATTALION COMMANDER whose command has been linked to the April 28 abduction of activist Jonas Joseph Burgos has been administratively suspended by Philippine Army chief Lt. Gen. Romeo Tolentino.

Army spokesperson Lt. Col. Ernesto Torres Jr. said the suspension of Lt. Col. Melquiades Feliciano, the commander of the Army's 56th Infantry Battalion based in Norzagaray, Bulacan, is meant to ensure a "speedy and impartial" investigation into Burgos' disappearance.

Torres said the suspension will take effect immediately after the elections.

At the same time, Tolentino ordered Army field commanders to deposit the license plates of all impounded vehicles, including unserviceable army-owned vehicles, to the command provost marshal or logistic officers of their respective units.

Tolentino said this would ensure that impounded vehicles, including their license plates, are secured in order to prevent these from being used in any illegal activity.

Commanders were also directed to immediately conduct an inventory of all impounded vehicles and report all missing license plates to concerned agencies.

The Army's 56th IB was linked to the abduction after the license plates of a Toyota Revo where Burgos was forcibly taken to were traced to a jeep seized in 2006 by a joint team from the Army and the Department of Environment and Natural Resources. The jeep has been parked since then inside the Army's camp in Bulacan.

In Iloilo City, Justice Secretary Raul Gonzalez has asked the Philippine Army to "explain" its role in Burgos' disappearance, saying Malacañang was being "unfairly" linked to the April 28 abduction.

"The Army must explain that," Gonzalez told reporters covering Team Unity's "miting de avance" here Thursday night. "We don't condone these things."

He said the Army must issue a public statement, and conduct an impartial inquiry.

Command responsibility

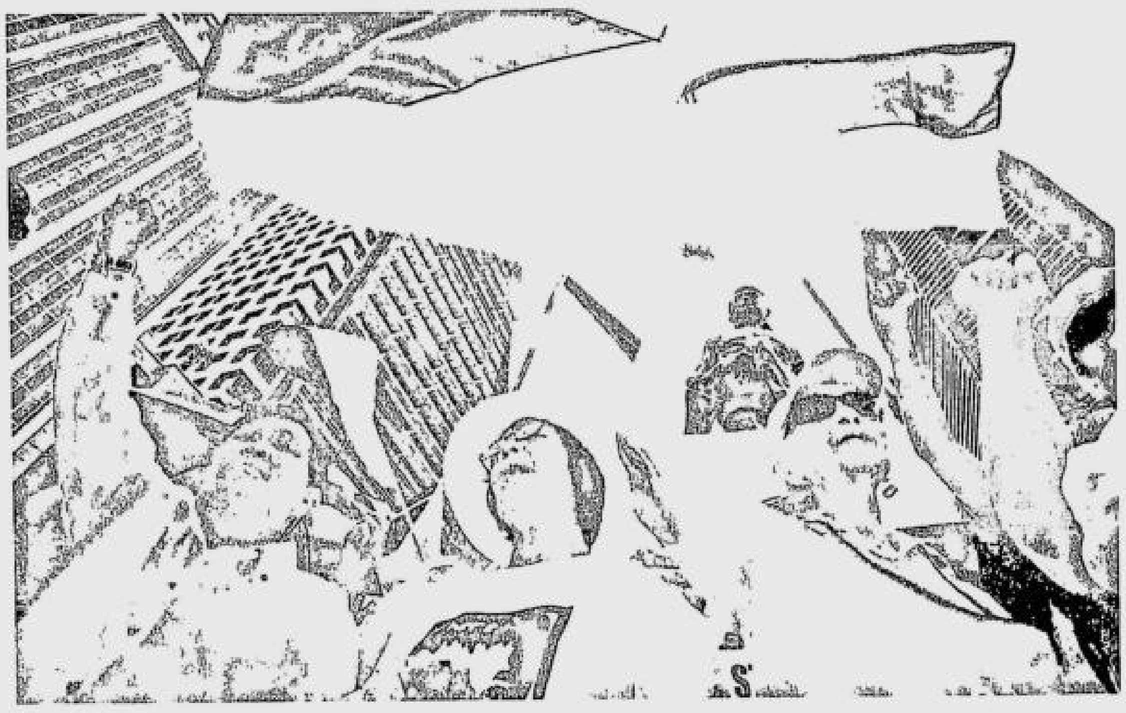
"At least the commanding officer in the area (should explain) because again what will follow there is the issue of command responsibility," he said, stressing that the justice department's hands were tied "because the start of any investigation is the police."

The military had denied any role in the abduction.

Feliciano maintained that settlers, belonging to urban poor group Kadamay, living behind the camp had stolen the license plates.

He said Kadamay was organized by the Communist Party of the Philippines.

Investigation into the abduction has so far proceeded at a snail's pace. *With reports from Tonette Orejas, Inquirer Central Luzon, Volt Contreras and DJ Yap*



WHERE'S JONAS? Members of civil society groups clench their fists in a rally on Ayala Avenue in Makati to protest the disappearance of Jonas Burgos.
REM ZAMORA

Police raise alert amid election violence

POLICE ACROSS THE COUNTRY were put on alert yesterday as the death toll from election-related violence rose to 104.

Philippine National Police chief Oscar Calderon placed all of the 118,000-strong police force on full alert at 8 a.m. Friday, which means all leaves are canceled and policemen will have to stay at their post at all times.

Calderon also called on all policemen to remain neutral and apolitical and not to participate in partisan politics.

He also assured that the conduct of the elections will be peaceful despite a steady rise of election-related violent incidents in the past few days.

During the four-month campaign for Monday's local and congressional elections, assassinations and ambushes have left 104 dead, half of them candidates.

Nearly 87,000 candidates are vying for 17,000 national and local positions. All 265 House of Representatives seats and half of the 24 Senate seats are up for grabs.

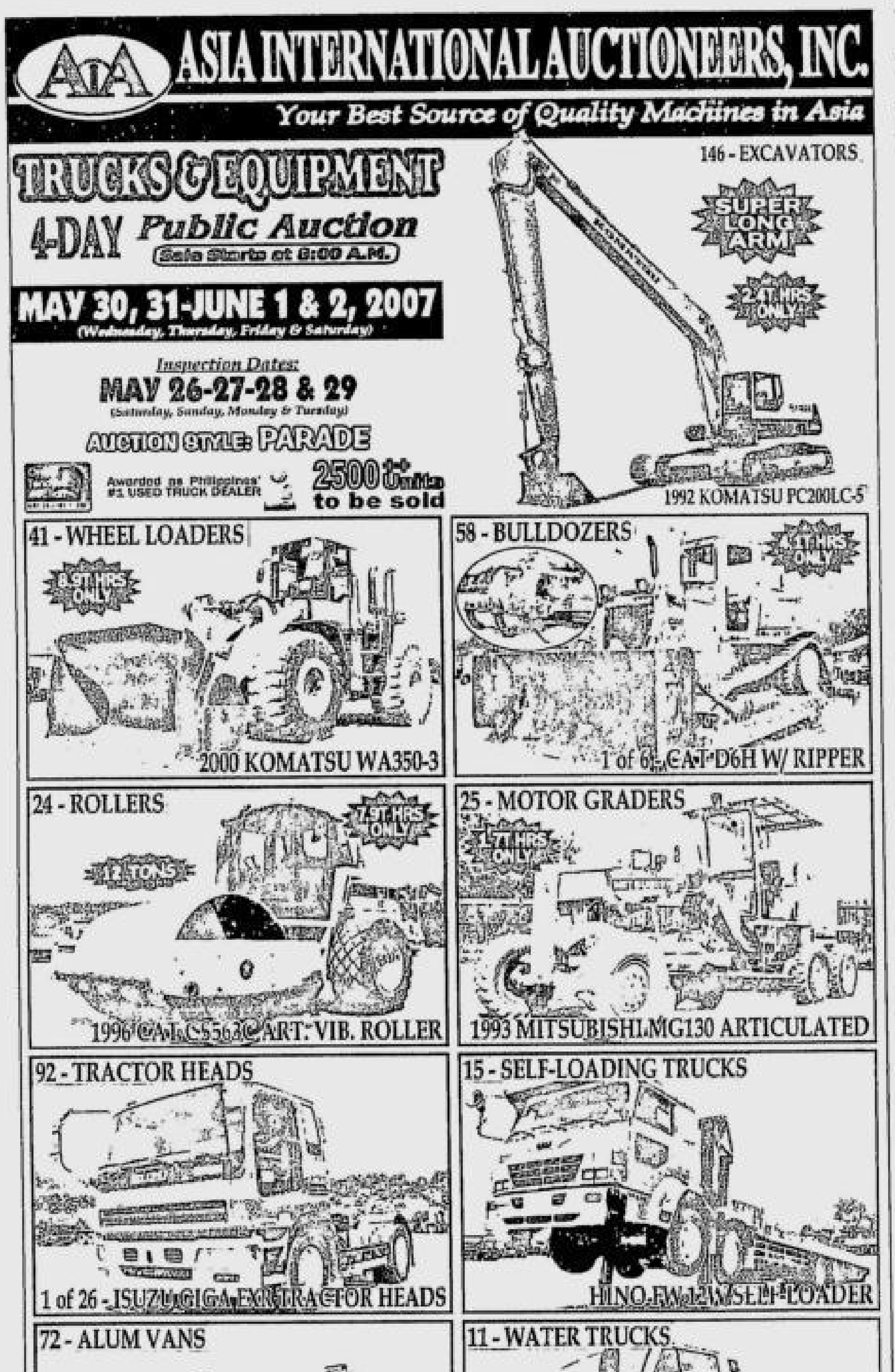
About 10 out of 81 provinces have been identified as hot spots. Some were placed under the control of the Commission on Elections, which has assumed command of provincial security forces from governors.

Meanwhile, PNP spokesperson, Chief Supt. Samuel D. Pagdilao Jr. said Calderon had instructed all PNP units to extend any assistance to representatives of international organizations who are in the country to observe the election process.

In Masbate, additional police and Army forces were set to arrive Friday in the province to augment the present troops and personnel that would ensure security in the conduct of elections.

The Comelec has placed the Bantayan Island in Cebu and the town of Monkayo in Compostela Valley under its control following the spate of election-related killings in these areas.

The poll body also listed Occidental Mindoro and Negros Occidental as areas of immediate concerns, needing augmentation of security forces. *Alcuin Papa with reports from Bobby Q. Labalan, Inquirer Southern Luzon, Edson C. Tandoc Jr. and Jhunnex Napallacan Inquirer Visayas*



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Joe de V lashes back at critics

By Volt Contreras

SPEAKER JOSE DE VENECIA, WHO IS seeking reelection in Pangasinan, yesterday snapped back at a group of critics based in Manila who are urging voters in his congressional district not to give him another shot at power.

"Offer a better alternative or shut up," De Venecia said in a statement directed at the group that has launched a signature campaign branding the administration congressman as the country's "No.1 Trapo" (traditional politician) and blaming the country's "current headaches" on his long hold on the House leadership.

On Wednesday, the group's spokesperson Norma Liongoren, a Quezon City-based art gallery curator, maintained that the campaign was not necessarily in support of De Venecia's rival, Dagupan Mayor Benjamin Lim.

De Venecia did not particularly name Liongoren's group but called on "Pangasinenses outside the province" to offer better alternatives and programs "instead of engaging in destructive, divisive and poisonous politics."

He then turned to bashing Lim, his opponent in the Pangasinan's 4th district, saying the latter was "known for incompetence as administrator of Dagupan City."

Under Lim's watch, he alleged, Dagupan reverted from being a first-class city to second class, with the city government incurring P300 million in debt "to be paid by the people.

De Venecia claimed it was he and his House allies who ensured that Dagupan would recover from the 1990 killer earthquake in Luzon, by passing a law allotting a P10-billion rebuilding fund for the affected areas.

Inquirer.net Voter's Guide

INQUIRER.NET HAS LAUNCHED WEB-based tools on its Eleksyon 2007 site (http://www.inquirer.net/specialfeatures/eleksyon2007/index.php) to help voters in making their choice for Monday's senatorial and local elections.

The Voter's Guide (http://www.inquirer.net/specialfeatures/eleksyon2007/votersguide.php) helps users rate candidates using a scorecard for pre-defined "roles" (strategist, servant leader, etc.) and leadership qualities (honesty, competence, etc.)

The scorecard is based on a research project undertaken by the Personnel Management Association of the Philippines (PMAP) on the Roles of a Good President, which was used in the 2004 presidential elections and updated for this year's polls.

The scorecard aims to help voters choose candidates in a more structured manner.

The Sample Ballot feature (http://www.inquirer.net/specialfeatures/eleksyon2007/ballot.php), meanwhile, helps voters come up with a list of names that they can print out and bring to polling precincts to guide them when filling out their ballots.

On the sample ballot form, voters can select senators from the list provided. Clicking on a senator's name brings up his profile and links to Inquirer.net's series of podcast interviews (http://newsinfo.inquirer.net/podcasts/) with senatorial candidates.

Voters can also add the names of party-list groups and local candidates.

Once done, voters can print out their sample ballots and take it with them to their precinct. The use of a list or "kodigo" is recommended by the Commission on Elections on its information website, BagongBotante.com.

Lawrence Casiraya, Inquirer.net

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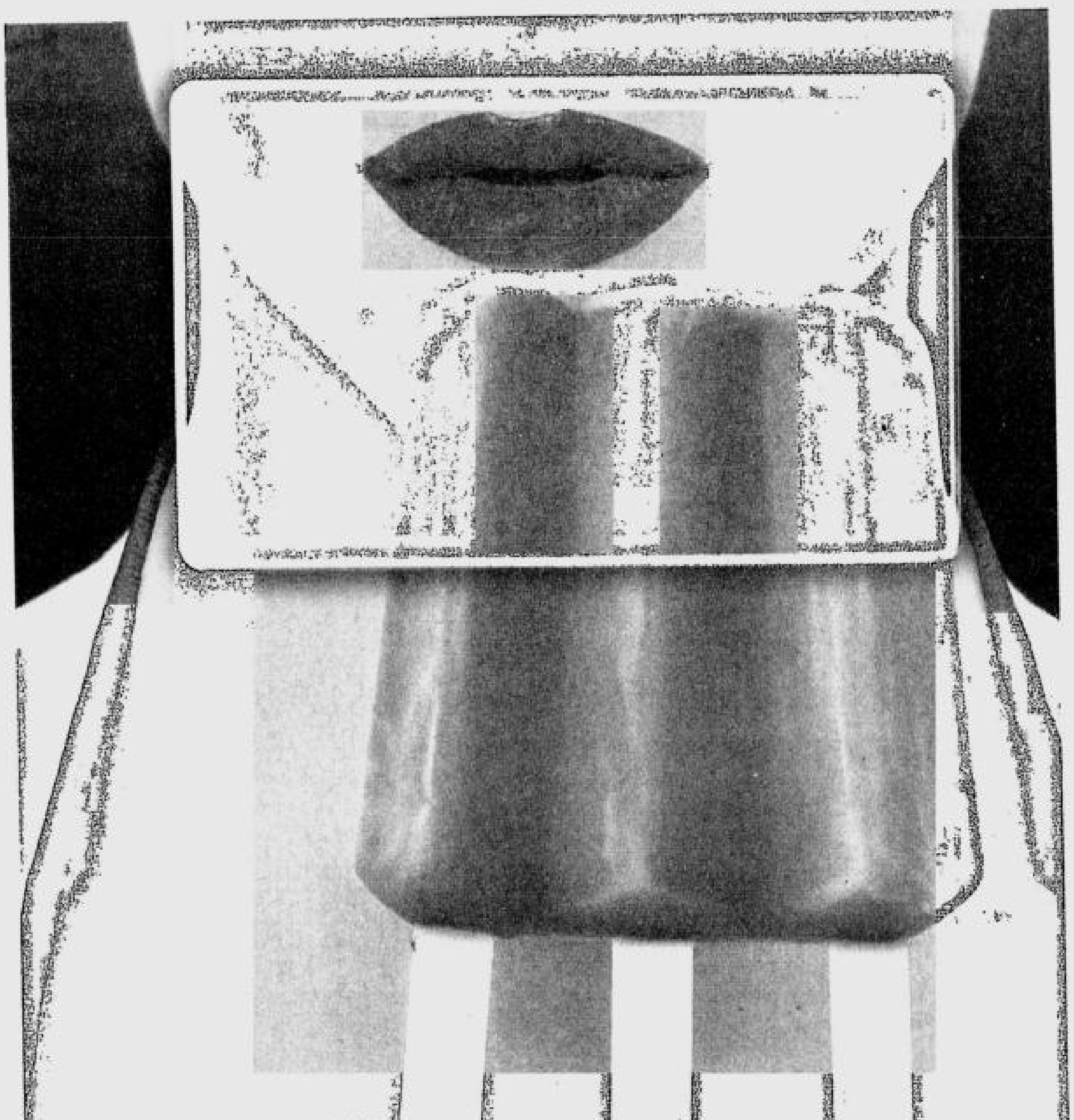

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Absentee voters still absent; turnout only 10% so far – DFA

By Cynthia D. Balana and Jerome Aning

ONLY 10 PERCENT OR 54,316 OUT OF THE 504,1000 Filipinos overseas have cast their votes for the May 14 elections although the number is expected to hit 80,000 this weekend, the Department of Foreign Affairs said yesterday.

In a press conference, DFA Undersecretary Rafael Seguis said he expected a surge in voting in the Middle East, particularly in Saudi Arabia and Oman on Friday, considered a non-working holiday there.

He added that Filipinos in Hong Kong and Singapore would troop to the embassies to cast their votes on Saturday or Sunday, their days-off.

"This coming Saturday or Sunday, we expect to exceed 6,238 votes. I think we'll hit a voter turnout of 80,000 by 3 p.m. Monday, Manila time," Seguis said. "We've done our best to encourage overseas Filipinos to vote."

Asked to name the reason for the low voter turnout, Seguis said it was because only senatorial and congressional seats were involved and not the presidency.

In the 2004 presidential election, he said, the voter turnout reached 65 percent or some 362,000 overseas Filipinos voted.

Also, some OFWs were mobile, meaning they have changed jobs and have moved from one country to the next so voting by mail was difficult as the ballots might not have reached them on time, Seguis said.

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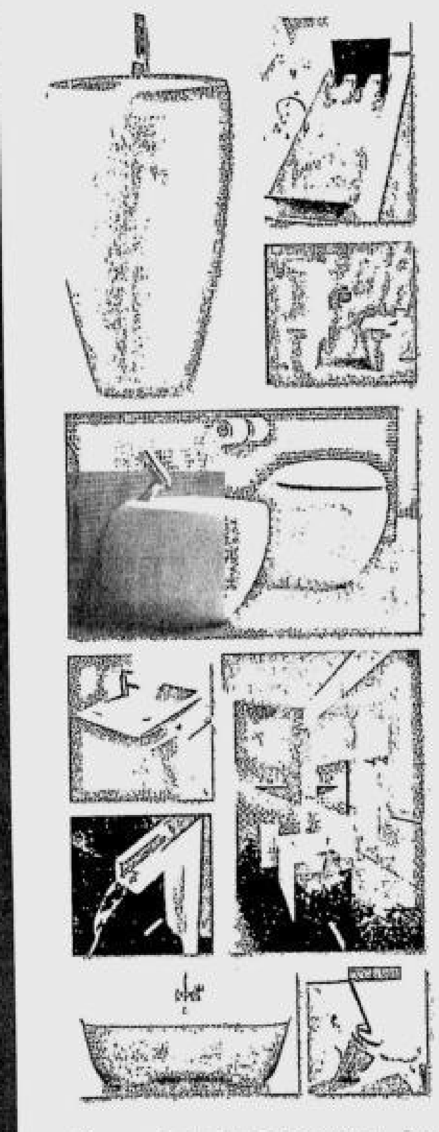

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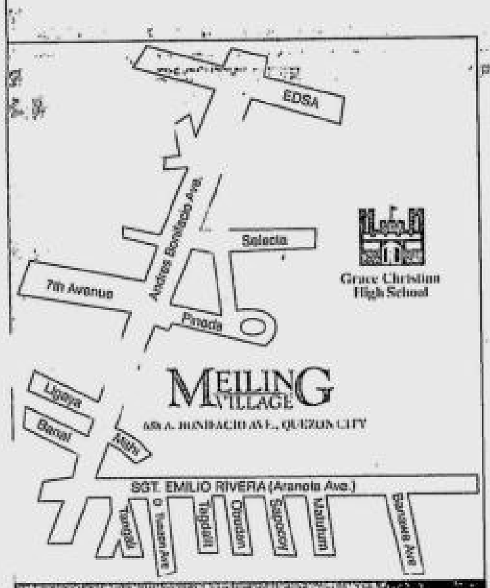
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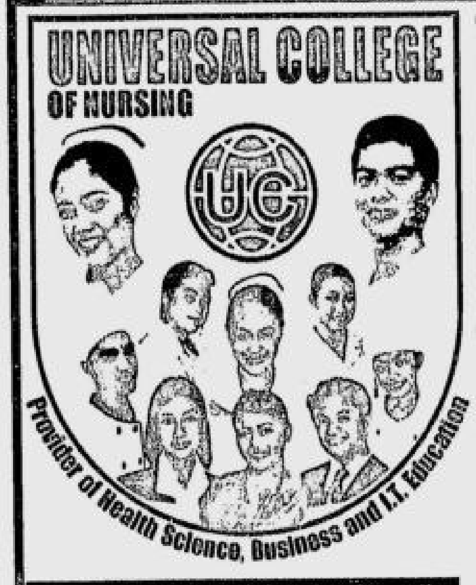
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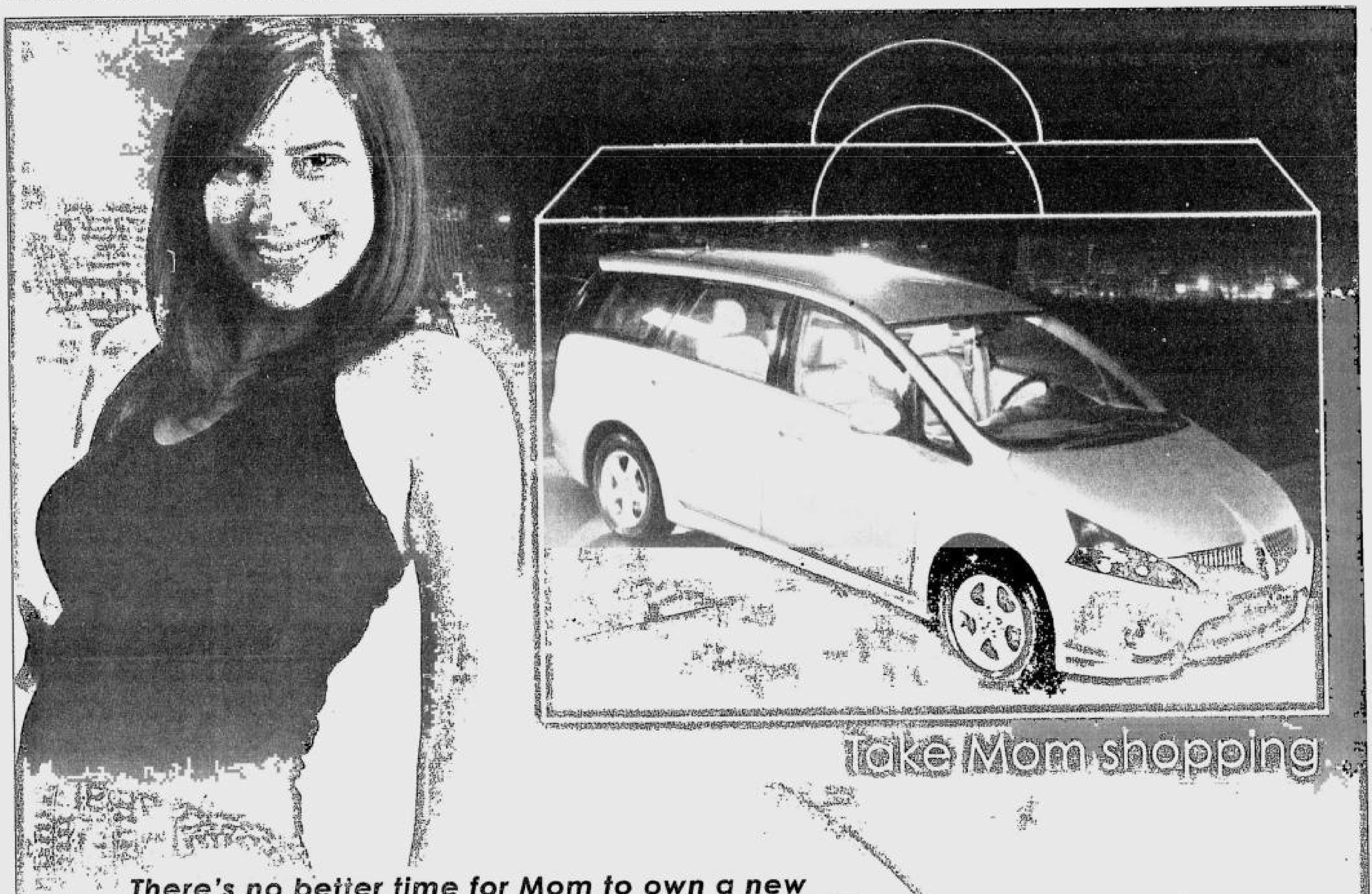

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RA 8223- Marikina	RA 8470- Compostela Valley
RA 8507- Paranaque	RA 7878- Kalinga Apayao
RA 8287- Taguig	RA 7901- Region XII
RA 8526- Valenzuela	

DECLARATION OF TOURIST SPOTS/TOURIST ZONE

- RA 7667- Bustos Dam and Tourist Resort
- RA 7668- Mt. Samat in Bataan
- RA 7690- National Park in Arayat, Pampanga
- RA 7822- Limasawa Island in Southern Leyte
- RA 8021- Moriones Festival in the Prov. of Marinduque
- RA 8093- Asinan Area, the Las Piñas Church and Bamboo Organ, the Father Cera Bridge and the Old District Hospital in the municipality of Las Piñas, Metro Manila
- RA 8072- [illegible] Falls in the Mun. of [illegible] Province of Leyte

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Absentee Voting Law (RA9189)
Family Courts Act of 1997 (RA8369)
Philippine Fisheries Code (RA8550)
Film Development Council of the Philippines Law (RA9167)
Optical Media Law (RA9239)
Seatbelts Use Act (RA 8750)

KONTRA SA GATT KONTRA SA EVAT KONTRA SA EPIRA-PPA

PAID BY: DABARKADS OF TITO SOTTO

MALACAÑANG
MANILA

BY THE PRESIDENT OF THE PHILIPPINES

EXECUTIVE ORDER NO. 620

RATIONALIZING AND SPEEDING UP THE DEVELOPMENT OF THE EAST AND NORTH TRIANGLES, AND THE VETERANS MEMORIAL AREA OF QUEZON CITY, AS A WELL-PLANNED, INTEGRATED AND ENVIRONMENTALLY BALANCED MIXED-USE DEVELOPMENT MODEL.

WHEREAS, the Metro Manila development Authority's Physical Development Framework Plan for Metro Manila (1995-2010) designates the North and East Triangles as Urban Promotion area, and the Quezon City Comprehensive Land Use Plan cites the North Triangle as an "Area of Growth/Influence";

WHEREAS, the properties within the area of 250 hectares tangent to North Avenue and bounded by Epifanio Delos Santos Avenue, East and North Avenues, have become disparately assigned for diverse uses that are not complementary, making the same vulnerable to urban blight and therefore do not reflect the best use of the land, given their present and projected market values as well as their strategic location;

WHEREAS, the collective properties therein have the biggest potential for large-scale development within the National Capital Region that can provide the significant stimulus needed by the government to help put the country at the forefront of global investment and business interest;

WHEREAS, the market prospects of the East and North Triangles are significant, thereby convincing international development and financing institutions like the World bank (WB) and the Asian Development Bank (ADB) to fund, as in fact the WB is funding, the development of a framework plan as well as a master plan for the development of these Triangles into a highly integrated, transportation, environment, commercial and residential model;

WHEREAS, this urban development model can serve as a basic guide for the government to use in creating more areas of competitive advantage serving as hubs of intense economic growth in different areas nationwide;

NOW, THEREFORE, I, GLORIA MACAPAGAL ARROYO, President of the Republic of the Philippines, by virtue of the powers vested in me by law, do hereby order:

Section 1. Creation. There is hereby created the Urban Triangle Development Commission (Tri Dev Commission) to be composed of the following:

a. A representative from the Office of the Mayor of Quezon City, as Chairman;
b. The General Manager of the National Housing Authority, as member; and
c. A representative from the Office of the President, as member.

Section 2. Purposes and Powers. The Tri Dev Commission shall pursue the following objectives, which shall in effect also constitute its powers;

a. Review , integrate and streamline plans, programs, allocations schemes, land use and other property management arrangements affecting properties within the North and East Triangles of Quezon City, as mandated by earlier proclamations, other laws and contracting arrangements, using as main reference materials the World Bank Study on the "Preparation of a Comprehensive Framework Plan for the Development of a Central Business District in Quezon City" and the ensuing World Bank Master Plan for the Central Business District in Quezon City.

b. Formulate , plan and program the development components, processes and strategies, as well as determine the land-use mix and resource applications necessary to achieve the development objectives for the area, as harmonized with the aforesaid World Bank study;

c. Manage, control and direct the implementation of the development program;

d. Formulate deal structures with owners of properties in the 250-hectare development area, that will hasten the development of the envisioned mixed-use development model, without prejudice to their equity interest;

e. Study the proper application of political and financial resources of both the National Government and the Local Government Unit in escalating implementation initiatives, as well as coordinate in the planning and execution of projects;

f. Form a Technical Working Group who shall provide the Tri Dev Commission with the needed technical assistance in the preparation of plans and programs as well as in executing implementation strategies, therefore serving as the infrastructure of people needed to support all stages of the development program.

Section 3. Initial Funding. The Tri Dev Commission shall, for its initial costs of operations, have such funds as may be approved by the Office of the President upon recommendation of the Department of Budget and Management (DBM).

Section 4. Repealing Clause. All other executive orders, proclamations, issuances, rules and regulations or parts therefore which are inconsistent with the provisions of this Executive Order, are hereby repealed, amended or modified accordingly.

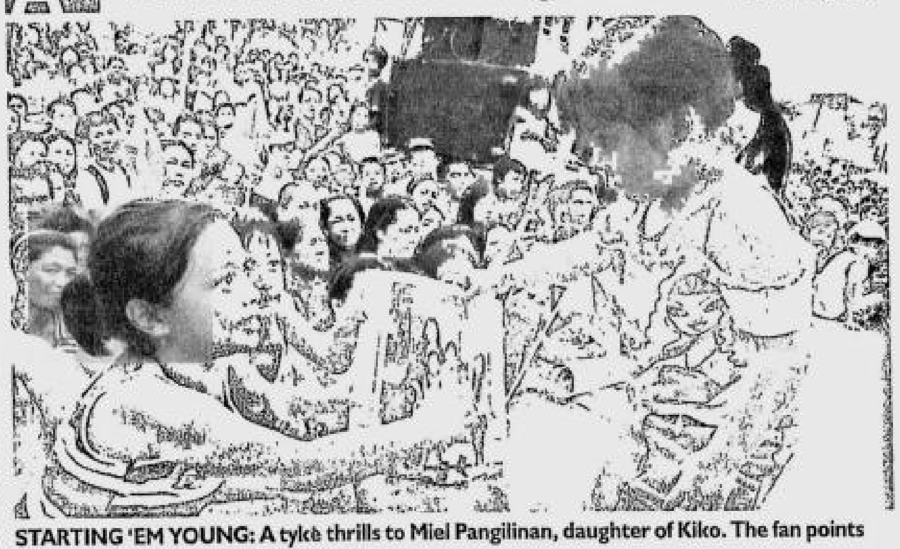
Section 5. Effectivity. This Executive Order shall take effect immediately upon its publication in a national newspaper of general circulation.

DONE in the City of Manila, this 4th day of May in the year of Our Lord , Two Thousand Seven.

Gloria Arroyo

By the President:

EDUARDO R. ERMITA
Executive Secretary



STARTING 'EM YOUNG: A tyke thrills to Miel Pangilinan, daughter of Kiko. The fan points her out in the Pangilinan family picture.

Kids starring in Senate bets' final TV ads

From page A1

aspect, it isn't all that decisive, because the thematic premises or platforms being summarized are generally of the "motherhood" type.

What does have major impact is the pervasive use of children in the new spots. Kids are all over the place in political ads these days—so much so that you'd think children could vote in this country!

The kid factor has assumed major significance because image-makers believe that it's the key to "softening" a candidate's public persona, especially if he/she is generally perceived to be tough, cold or distant. But children are being used so often in the latest ads that the ploys pretty much cancel each other out.

One thing is clear: Kids in political ads are most effective when they're the candidates' own, as the spots of Ralph Recto, Francis Kiko Pangilinan, Gregorio Honasan and Cesar Montano indicate.

Stars as endorsers

Also prevalent these days is the use of stars as endorsers—Sarah Geronimo for Edgardo Angara, Angel Locsin for Aquilino "Koko" Pimentel III, Robin Padilla for Richard Gomez, a number of celebrities for Juan Miguel Zubiri, Vic Sotto and Joey de Leon for Vicente Sotto III, Ryan Agoncillo and Judy Ann Santos for Pangilinan, etc.

The case of Susan Roces for Francis "Chiz" Escudero is a significant variation, because Roces is not just a star; she's Fernando Poe Jr.'s widow, with all the "presidential" reverberations that that key connection entails.

Ditto for Cory Aquino for her son, Benigno Aquino III.

Speaking of "presidential" connections, Joseph Estrada has also turned endorser—not of a specific candidate but of the entire Genuine Opposition ticket.

As the political campaign enters its final days, other "composite" or group endorsements have surfaced, like Bayani Fernando's spot for the Team Unity senatorial lineup.

In these endorsements of entire tickets, the candidates sum up their platforms in a word or two, so viewers are hit with a barrage of slogans or tag lines ("Kababaihan," "Edukasyon," "Pabahay," "Sining at Kultura") that have Motherhood written all over them.

Acronym as slogan

On the positive side, this shows the candidates' variety and range of avowed concerns, suggesting that if voters go for an entire ticket, most of the country's prime needs shall have been addressed. Contrarily, however, it intimates a scattershot approach to problem-solving that could be similarly problematic later on.

In any case, these "composite" spots enable each ticket to come up with an acronym derived from its candidates' names—like GO's "PLAN CO REVOLT" and TU's "MAS PARA SA KIDZ MO." The hope is that the acronym will become a handy reminder of candidates' names at voting time—and even end up as a slogan or battle cry of sorts.

Some tasty tidbits: The effectivity of star endorsements was proven in the last polls by Judy Ann Santos' plugs for Jamby Madrigal, who did become a senator. Interestingly, this time around, it's Madrigal who's doing the endorsing—of Antonio Trillanes!

Even before the Judy Ann-Jamby combine, Sen. Mar Roxas set another much emulated example when he scored high in the polls, partly because his spots were aired so frequently on TV. This frequency had a cumulative effect that was emulated this year by quite a number of senatorial candidates led by Prospero Pichay.

Instructively, however, the ultra-expensive ploy has not yet had the same desired outcome. Should it continue not to do the trick, it'll be a very painful lesson for everyone concerned, to wit: Money talks, a lot of money talks loudest, but volume doesn't necessarily convince.

(Interestingly, Roxas is back on TV again—but the spot in which he figures isn't for any candidate, but for clean, honest elections.)

Emotion-heavy

Also very striking is the emergence of new spots that are heavy on "emotion," as in the moment in Michael Defensor's new political ad, in which an old woman gratefully cries, "Mike, *ipagdarasal kita* (I'll pray for you)," and the candidate is visibly affected.

Genuine emotion is effective in making a candidate look more vulnerable and thus accessible to the "ordinary" voter. But it can easily go over the top, as in Tessie Oreta's "Apology" spot, so it should be used sparingly.

Similarly, a number of spots emphasize the value of "family" in the nation's life, with the Recto, Pangilinan, Gomez, Zubiri, Aquino, Lacson and Montano TV ads as prime examples. Again, the gambit hits a soft spot in the Filipino psyche, but could easily come off as excessively utilitarian and forcing-through.

We also note that some of the newest spots are shorter than the earlier ones. Is this a sign that candidates' media coffers are drying up?

Or it could be that image-makers are opting for shorter spots aired more frequently for the same total price, to achieve a cumulative, "saturation" effect on viewer-voters' subconscious.

The exceptions to this noticeable shift are the new spots of Pangilinan and Loren Legarda.

Pangilinan's latest ad takes time to "summarize" the many reasons why he has the "K" to be reelected senator.

Legarda's own "final" spot instructively presents her in a less youthful and "sweet" light. This time around, the breadth and range of her most significant concerns are summed up, and the spot ends with the candidate confidently striding toward the camera, looking every inch the senator she aspires again to be.

Without coming off as overconfident or smug, the spot intimates that for the survey-topping candidate, destiny is just an arm's reach away.

Pragmatism

The most pragmatic spot of all is Alan Cayetano's: It concentrates on urging voters to write his name in full, to obviate its being counted for another candidate with the same surname. [Joselito Peter Cayetano was disqualified as we go to press.]

At face value, this spot may strike viewers as lacking in creativity or inspiration. But to us, it's one of the most effective political spots on TV because it repeats his name, both visually and verbally, many times, until "Alan Cayetano" comes off as a sort of mantra that could impinge on voters' subconscious.

Sonia Roco's final spot is also unique in its own way, because it elevates to iconic level her desire to carry on the much admired work of her late husband, Raul, one of the few politicians in this country described by observers as "the best president the Philippines never had."

The spot's approach may strike some viewers as too "referential" and "deferential," but others could find it movingly effective.

The same goes for Pimentel's forthrightly grateful reference to his father Nene's preeminent mentorship in terms of principles and achievement.

More quixotically, Vic Magsaysay is described in his new spot as Batang Barangay, but no explanation is provided about the relevance of that tag line. Ditto for Luis "Chavit" Singson, whose ability to transform his province promises to empower other regions as well—but no details are cited on how this can be effected.

Another unique spot is Joker Arroyo's animated TV ad, which focuses on his signature salt-and-pepper "head of hair," and uses it in a way akin to the strategy employed to create "brand identity and recognition."

This, plus the spot's no-nonsense tag line ("*Pag* bad *ka, lagot ka* [If you're bad, you're done for]!") makes it more easily "accessible" than most.

More sober approach

We also observe that the "fiesta" mood that characterized many political spots weeks ago has been replaced by a generally more sober approach. Perhaps the artificially slap-happy style left viewers cold because it didn't tell them what they needed to know, thus the welcome shift in strategy.

Finally, we note that while most candidates' spots boost their achievements without denigrating the competition, some composite ads unapologetically hit the opposition by calling a spade a shovel. Will these ads' "shock value" appeal to viewer-voters, or turn them off?

Where's real person?

The plot thickens, and this and other key questions will be answered shortly, as viewers stop viewing and start voting for their best bets for the Senate.

Will their choices also be the best for the country? And, how much have the political ads genuinely helped them in making those choices?

Yes, in the end, it's all about image-making. But where is the real person within the image—and has the Filipino voter become astute enough to tell the difference?

GMA pays tribute to Filipino doctors, specially Mike's

NOT EVEN THE LINGERING EFFECTS OF her two-day bout with diarrhea and fever could stop President Macapagal-Arroyo from attending a national convention of doctors yesterday so she could personally pay tribute to the country's doctors, particularly those who saved the life of her husband, Jose Miguel "Mike" Arroyo.

"It's a special convention for me because it's an opportunity for me and for us to celebrate the excellence, compassion and heroism of our physicians," a still weak-looking Ms Arroyo said.

Ms Arroyo, who canceled her schedules since Wednesday afternoon after suffering from diarrhea and fever in Cebu, said she had to attend the 37th annual convention of the Philippine College of Physicians, the organization of more than 6,000 internists, at the Philippine International Convention Center.

"And more personally for me, it is an opportunity to acknowledge once again the admirable proficiency of our doctors, such as those doctors who saved the life of my husband," she said.

Ms Arroyo recalled how she felt during the critical hours of April 9 and 10 when her 60-year-old husband was undergoing a highly risky open heart surgery at the St. Luke's Medical Center.

"That night when he was undergoing surgery and I was in the chapel, I didn't know whether in a few hours time I might be a widow," Ms Arroyo said.

"But that trial has reinforced my deep pride, and... because my husband's case was very well covered in the media it has reinforced the deep pride of all the Filipinos in the Filipino physician," Ms Arroyo said.

Mike Arroyo underwent an emergency aneurysmectomy to repair a tear in his aorta at SLMC by an 18-man medical team. *Juliet Labog-Javellana*

Priest seeks disqualification of Pineda for vote-buying

CITY OF SAN FERNANDO—LAWYERS OF Pampanga gubernatorial candidate Fr. Eddie Panlilio yesterday filed a case seeking to disqualify his rival, Board Member Lilia Pineda, due to alleged massive vote-buying.

Panlilio's lawyer, Ernesto Francisco, said the distribution of medicine, water systems and money by Pineda, including her statements committing to give more help, have been documented by the reports in the news programs of GMA-7's 24 Oras and a local cable television channel.

"She violated Section 261 of the Omnibus Election Code," Francisco told reporters at the provincial office of the Commission on Elections here.

He was referring to a provision banning political candidates from giving, promising cash, materials or favors to incite voters into voting for or against any candidate.

Francisco said Panlilio's other volunteer lawyers continued to gather testimonies from the recipients.

At her "miting de avance" in nearby Bacolor, Pineda said she did not consider the giving of medicine and other forms of emergency aid to sick people as vote buying.

"They're sick and dying. What could I do but help? Most of those I helped were not voters. They were old people," she said during a rally of some 20,000 supporters from 20 towns and this city.

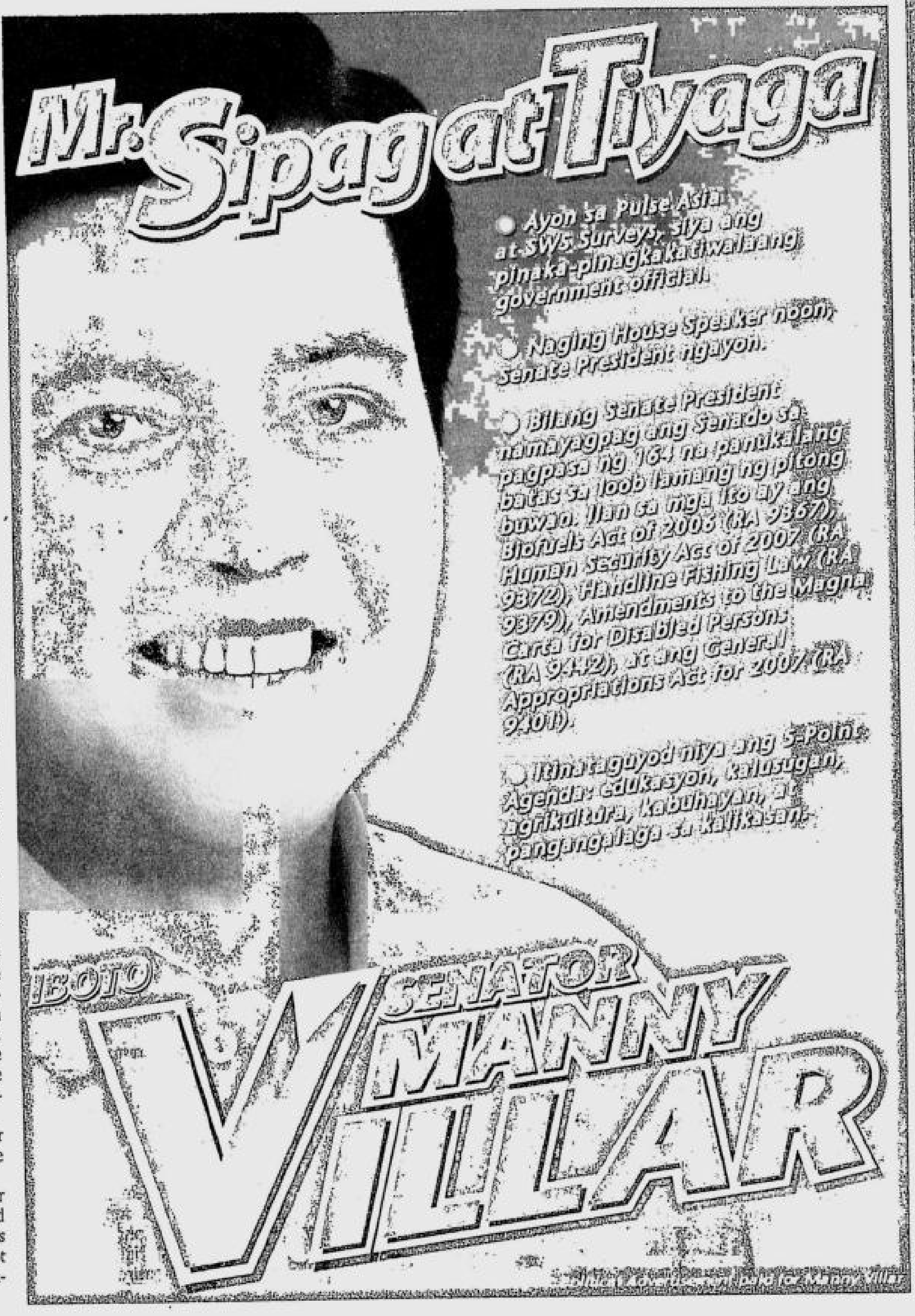
"When I gave them help, I did not ask them to vote for me. I simply gave help," said Pineda, 56, wife of suspected jueteng lord Rodolfo "Bong" Pineda.

Also yesterday, another gubernatorial candidate, Elly Pamatong, filed a disqualification case against Panlilio for allegedly violating the constitutional provision on the separation of church and state, the canon law and his vow of celibacy.

Panlilio, 53, said he has not violated the Constitution because he has taken a leave from his priestly duties before he filed his certificate of candidacy on March 29.

He said he has not violated the canon law or the rules of the Roman Catholic Church because he has also sought a leave from his ministry.

Panlilio, who has been in the priesthood for 26 years, said he does not have a wife, a child or has kept a family. He dismissed Pamatong's case as a form of harassment and an attempt to gain media mileage. *Tonette Orejas, Inquirer Central Luzon*



- Ayon sa Pulse Asia at SWS Surveys, siya ang pinaka-pinagkakatiwalaang government official.
- Naging House Speaker noon, Senate President ngayon.
- Bilang Senate President namayagpag ang Senado sa pagpasa ng 164 na panukalang batas sa loob lamang ng pitong buwan. Ilan sa mga ito ay ang Biofuels Act of 2006 (RA 9367), Human Security Act of 2007 (RA 9372), Handline Fishing Law (RA 9379), Amendments to the Magna Carta for Disabled Persons (RA 9442), at ang General Appropriations Act for 2007 (RA 9401).
- Itinataguyod niya ang 5-Point Agenda: edukasyon, kalusugan, agrikultura, kabuhayan, at pangangalaga sa kalikasan.

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SC names 111 courts to handle election cases

By Leila B. Salaverria

TO RESOLVE POLL DISPUTES quickly, the Supreme Court yesterday designated 111 regional trial courts to serve as special courts to handle election contests involving municipal officials. It also directed judges of these special courts to resolve cases within six months after filing.

The high tribunal said extensions beyond the six-month period would be subject to its approval. Should the judge fail to resolve the election contest in six months, he would be placed under preventive suspension and relieved of all duties except to decide on the case, it added. The judge would also be subjected to disciplinary action.

Moreover, the cases should be resolved 30 days after they are submitted for decision.

"Election cases should be given preference over all other cases except petitions for habeas corpus," the high court said in Administrative Order 54-2007.

Supreme Court Justice Reynato Puno said it was important that poll disputes be resolved quickly given the importance of elections in a democracy.

"These special courts [will] ensure the expeditious resolution of election contests involving elective municipal officials. To reiterate, election cases enjoy high priority because what is involved here is nothing less than the sovereignty of the people, the very heart of a democratic government," Puno said in a statement.

The Supreme Court earlier approved the new rules for the trial courts handling election contests for municipal and barangay officials. These rules will take effect on May 15 and will apply to election cases arising from the May 14 polls.

The election contests to be handled by the special courts are: protests that deal with fraud and irregularities in the election, complaints on the counting of ballots and the canvassing of votes for municipal and barangay officials, and petitions for quo warranto which refer to cases questioning the qualifications of an elective official.

On the other hand, election contests involving regional, provincial and city officials are handled by the Commission on Elections. Protests involving Presidents and Vice Presidents, senators and members of the House of Representatives are handled by their respective electoral tribunals.

The high court also said that all single sala courts would be considered special courts and should give priority to election contests. In multiple sala areas where no special courts had been designated, the election cases would be raffled to the regular courts.

The high tribunal also limited the number of candidates who could file election cases.

Under the new rules, those allowed to file election contests before the trial courts are candidates for the same office who will get the second or third highest number of votes.

In multi-slot positions like say, councilor, only four candidates following the last-ranked winner will be allowed to file a protest.

The Supreme Court decided to come up with the new rules after receiving complaints from election lawyers Sixto Brillantes, Romulo Macalintal, Leila de Lima and Pete Quadra about corruption in trial courts handling poll disputes.

The four lawyers said there was a need to review the rules in deciding election protests in trial courts to make the process faster and more fair.

In April, the high court created a subcommittee headed by former Justice and ex-Commission on Elections chair Bernardo Pardo with members Brillantes, Macalintal, De Lima and Quadra.

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Help Stop Corruption and the Killings

PERC – the HK-based risk consultancy firm, recently announced the results of its survey: the Philippines is now the "MOST CORRUPT" economy in Asia. In its report, PERC sums it up well: "There is no sincere effort to curb corruption." ***It's all lip service.***

The Philippines is now the second most dangerous place for journalists, next only to Iraq. Philip Alston, UN special rapporteur on extrajudicial killings, said in his report "I am convinced a ***significant*** number of the killings could be linked to the armed forces… I am certain the number is high enough to be ***distressing.***"

In spite of GMA's bold pronouncements that they will deal with this problem decisively, the killings continue. There is really no sincere effort to stop it. ***It's all lip service.***

You can help end corruption and stop the killings.

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PANGASINAN 4TH	
JOSE DE VENECIA (Lakas-CMD)	BENJAMIN LIM
PAMPANGA 2ND	
MIKEY ARROYO (Kampi)	DR. JOEY MONTEMAYOR (LP)
CAMARINES NORTE - LONE	
RENATO UNICO (Lakas)	LIWAYWAY VINZONS CHATO (LP)
CAMARINES SUR 1ST	
DATO MACAPAGAL ARROYO (Kampi)	SABAS MABULO (LP)
CAMARINES SUR 2ND	
LUIS VILLAFUERTE (Kampi)	CHOLO ROCO (Aksyon)
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RAUL GONZALES, JR. (Lakas)	BENJIE GENGOS (LP)
NEGROS OCCIDENTAL 5TH	
IGGY ARROYO (Kampi)	APOLINARIO LOZADA (LP)
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Comelec unseats Vizcaya governor

BAYOMBONG, NUEVA Vizcaya—Upholding an earlier ruling that her win in the 2004 elections was marked by irregularities, the Commission on Elections on Thursday ousted Gov. Luisa Cuaresma and instead declared her dead rival, Leonardo Byron Perez Jr., as the winner.

In an en banc resolution, the Comelec affirmed the ruling of its first division nullifying Cuaresma's proclamation and declaring Perez, who died in January this year, as the governor of this province.

"This commission declares that the resolution of the first division pronouncing [Perez] as the duly elected governor of Nueva Vizcaya and ordering for the ouster of [Cuaresma] from the office of the governor is deemed affirmed," said the resolution.

It also declared as vacant the gubernatorial post here due to the earlier refusal of Vice Gov. Jose Gambito to assume the protest following Perez's death, and contest Cuaresma's proclamation as governor.

Political allies

Cuaresma and Gambito are political allies running for governor and vice governor, respectively, under their local party Abante Vizcaya.

In its resolution, the poll body dismissed Cuaresma's claim that the case was deemed moot following Perez's death.

"An election contest involves not merely conflicting private aspirations but is imbued with paramount public interests... Broad perspectives of public policy impose upon courts the imperative duty to ascertain… who is the real candidate elected in expeditious a manner as possible," the Comelec said, citing a Supreme Court decision.

The case stemmed from the election protest filed by Perez contesting Cuaresma's proclamation in the May 10, 2004 local elections.

On Jan. 31, 2006, the Comelec's first division, in a unanimous vote, nullified Cuaresma's victory after declaring that about 3,000 votes earlier counted in her favor were contained in "marked" ballots.

This prompted Cuaresma's lawyers to file a motion for reconsideration before the Comelec en banc. *Melvin Gascon, Inquirer Northern Luzon*

AFP earmarks P6.2B for new gear

THE PHILIPPINE MILITARY, ONE OF THE worst-equipped in Asia, has earmarked P6.2 billion for new helicopters to better fight communist and Moro rebels, officials said yesterday.

The military's muscle-building, which will also include boats and combat gear, comes in tandem with programs to work with civilian authorities and social services to win over populaces where rebels are active, Defense Secretary Hermogenes Ebdane said at a forum with foreign correspondents. *AP*

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	Salutatorian	- 75% Discount in Tuition and Miscellaneous Fees for 3 Terms - Book allowance worth of Php 2,500.00 per term - 3 sets of school uniform plus 1 set of PE uniform
	Top 10 of the graduating batch with a minimum population of 150	- 50% Discount in Tuition and Miscellaneous Fees for 3 terms - Book usage privilege - 3 sets of school uniform plus 1 set of PE uniform
Academic Scholarship	Student obtaining GPA at least 3.01	- 75% Discount in Tuition and Miscellaneous Fees per term
	Student obtaining GPA at least 2.5 to 3.0	- 50% Discount in Tuition and Miscellaneous Fees per term
Entrance Merit	College Admission Test Score = 95-99 with GWA of at least 90% or better	- 100% Discount in Tuition for 1 term - Book allowance worth of Php 1,250.00 for 1 term
	College Admission Test Score = 90-94 with GWA of at least 88 to 89.9%	- 50% Discount in Tuition for 1 term - Book allowance worth of Php 1,250.00 for 1 term
Financial Assistance Scholarship	Parents combined annual income does not exceed Php 200,000.00	- 50% Discount in Tuition and Miscellaneous Fees per term - Book usage privilege

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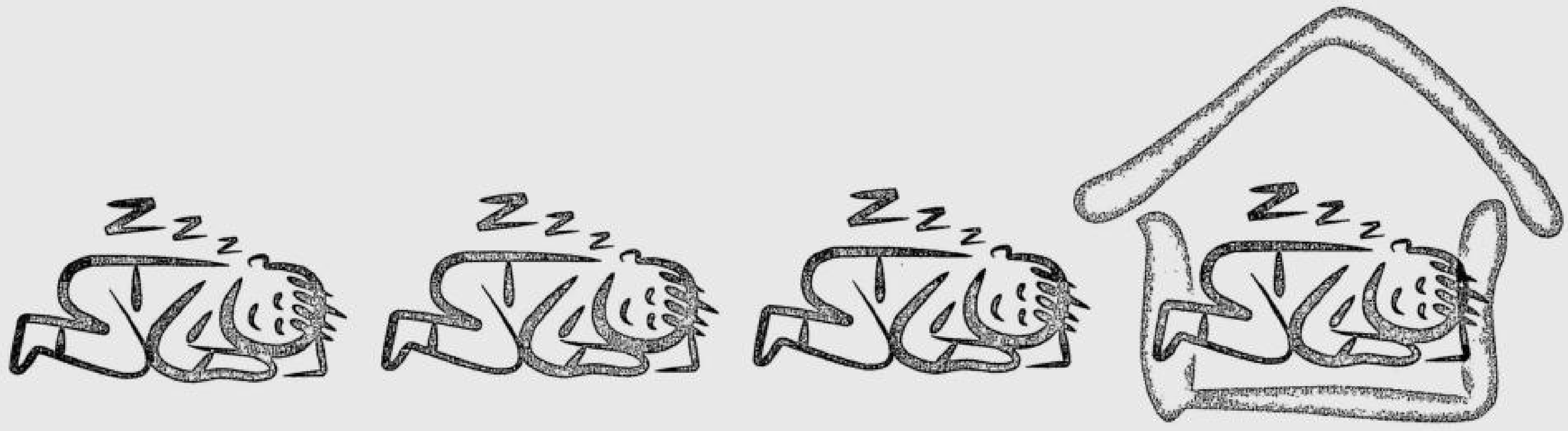

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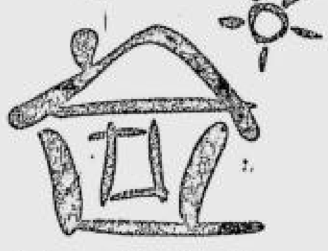

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SINGSON

ESTRADA

Chavit: Whether I win or lose, Erap will still be in jail

From page A1

the poor performance in pre-election surveys of his compadre-turned-archenemy, Singson, who was at the 25th spot.

"*Wala yang survey* (Surveys are nothing); that is just mind conditioning. Erap will know better after the elections," Singson told the INQUIRER yesterday from Bohol where he was campaigning.

Although his fate in the elections was unsure, Singson said he was sure that after the elections Estrada would still be in jail.

The INQUIRER reported yesterday that Estrada was very pleased with the Social Weather Stations survey showing six senatorial candidates of the Genuine Opposition in the winners' circle compared to only four from the administration slate.

What Estrada relished most was the dismal showing of Singson, who was at No. 25, a slot higher than the lesser known administration candidate Sultan Jamalul Kiram III in the SWS' final pre-election survey.

It was Singson who accused Estrada of accepting payoffs from gambling lords and pocketing tobacco excise taxes intended for Ilocos Sur during his presidency. The charges led to Estrada's ouster from Malacañang in January 2001 and his eventual arrest and detention for plunder and corruption charges.

Country on Ilocano votes

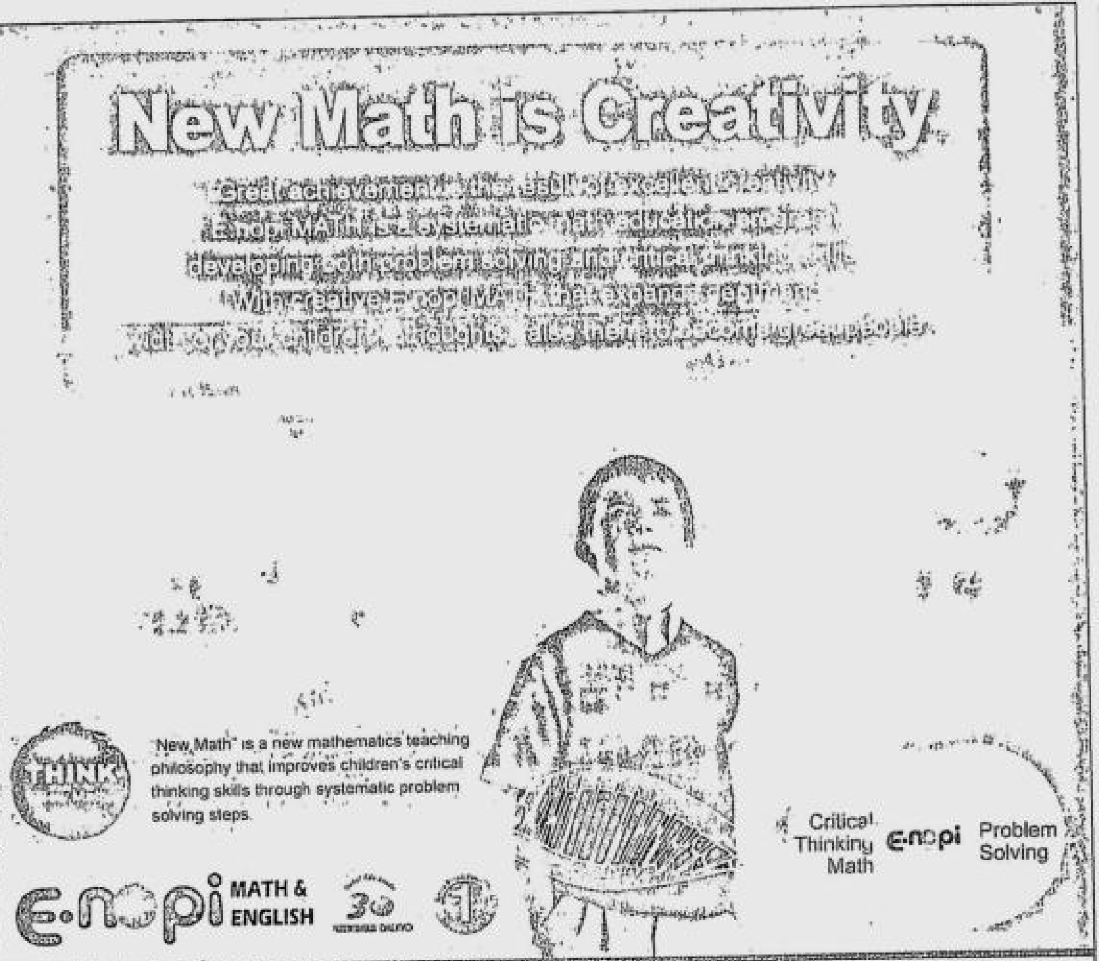
Singson said he believed he still has a "good chance" of winning because of the administration's machinery and his Ilocano lineage.

"I have practically reached all the provinces of the country and I have mingled with the people. I feel I have a good chance to win," he said.

Singson said local officials he met were committed to supporting him and the entire administration slate.

He said he was also counting on the Ilocano votes, as he is the only full-blooded Ilocano candidate.

"Ilocanos rally behind a fellow Ilocano. That will be my 'X factor,'" he said.



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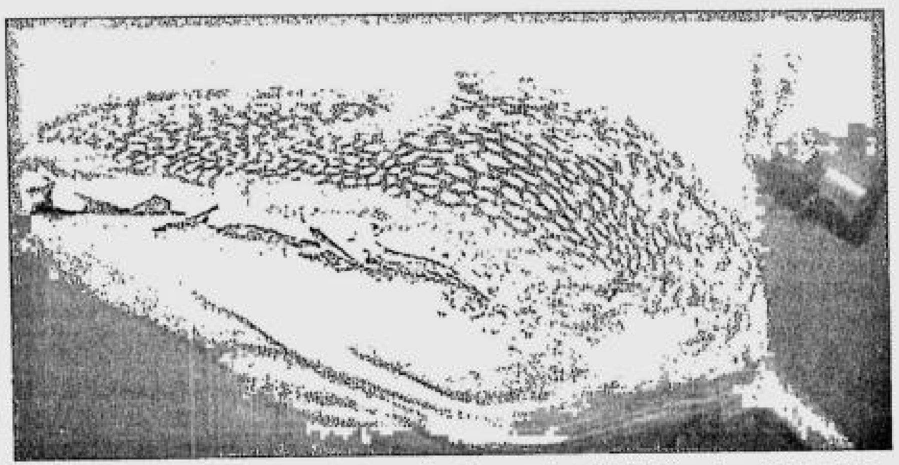

"THE GREATEST FISH OF ALL, the butanding, is as gentle at it is big like a bus. It is found in abundant numbers in what has come to be known as the World's Whale Shark Capital," the once obscure town of Donsol in Sorsogon.

Butanding 'God's gift ...

From page A1

our team will be swimming with the greatest fish of them all.

It is a sweltering summer day in May and we are in Donsol, known as the Butanding Capital of the World. Before 1997, the world's most popular whale shark tour was in Ningaloo Reef, West Australia, where hopefuls enlisted the aid of a light spotter plane. Aside from being rather pricey ($350 to $500 or P16,650 to P23,790 per person), whale shark interactions were not guaranteed.

Whale shark capital

Little did the world know that for years, fishermen from an unknown town in Sorsogon were shooing away dozens of friendly, lumbering sharks bumping into their nets. And since 1998, World Wide Fund for Nature (WWF), a global conservation group, has played a crucial role in establishing community-based ecotourism by facilitating fund-sourcing and stakeholder mobilization for the conservation of the species—now deemed by the Department of Tourism as a flagship ecotourism destination and one of the best attractions of the Bicol region.

Verdel Barruga, a fisherman, recalls: "Before we considered the butanding pests, for they ploughed through our nets and drove away smaller fish. After 1997, we realized they were God's gift to Donsol."

With WWF's help, fishermen that once hunted the gentle creatures now act as guides for tourists.

Donsol, situated 540 km southeast of Manila, has quite possibly, the world's highest aggregation of whale sharks. Though found in other places such as Australia and the coast of Zanzibar in Tanzania, Donsol's giant residents are unique because they stay within a kilometer from shore.

Largest fish

Butanding season peaks each summer, when algal blooms give rise to unimaginable quantities of plankton. This happens from February to May. Even after the southwest monsoon season in October, the sea might bless a lucky traveler with a glimpse of the world's largest fish.

Wise to the ways of the sea, these ancient mariners spend close to a century travelling the globe. Relatively little is known of the species, with less than 350 encounters ever reported prior to the mid-1980s.

Discovered by Sir Andrew Smith off the coast of South Africa in 1828, the strikingly patterned whale shark (rhincodon typus) exceeds the length of your typical passenger bus and weighs more than six adult elephants. Though ponderous and slow moving, its massive five-foot mouth helps it gulp down more than two tons of plankton and krill daily. Despite the formidable appearance, its teeth are only about 2 mm long. Coupled with a calm disposition, the butanding is considered almost completely harmless to humans.

Just a decade ago, whale sharks were being slaughtered in alarming rates off Pamilacan Island, Bohol, and in Donsol itself. On March 25, 1998, the Department of Agriculture issued Fisheries Administrative Order 193, which bans the capture, sale, purchase, possession, transport or export of whale sharks. Ecotourism was to replace age-old hunting practices. After nine years, things were looking up.

Nationwide, butanding sightings are on the rise, hopefully the result of coastal conservation efforts by tireless environmental stewards like WWF, Haribon and Conservation International.

From January to February this year, a 10-foot long juvenile butanding frequented the PNOC Pier in Mabini, Batangas—in full view of bystanders.

In February, a local fisherman from Calapan, Mindoro, accidentally reeled in a pair. One eventually swam off but the other, a 26-foot long female, had to be released manually.

Another three mysteriously made an appearance last March in Sablayan; Occidental Mindoro. They were christened "Dugoy," the Mangyan term for friend.

One was recorded off Palawan's Honda Bay with babies in tow.

Overwhelming

Recalls Dr. Filemon Romero, WWF consultant for Tawi-Tawi: "Our local Badjao friends often see butanding in the Secorong Panaytayan Reef between Semporna and Sitangkai. Years ago, I saw the sharks in the Turtle Islands, where they are called '*kaytan tokke*.'"

WWF project manager Ruel Pine, who has been successfully overseeing WWF's Donsol project for the past seven years, says, "Historically, whale sharks swam in great abundance around most of the Philippines. I continue to receive reports of whale shark sightings, and this is very overwhelming."

Though sporadically seen from Luzon to Mindanao, Donsol still remains the primary bastion for our butanding.

Taking the plunge

"Jump!" bellows Lino, back in Donsol. We oblige and dive in. Moments later we are greeted by an unusually marked juvenile, perhaps 7 meters long. Silver pompano and giant remora accompany the lone creature. After what seems like minutes (in reality, mere seconds) the shark takes a nose dive and disappears, leaving us breathless in its wake.

Before we even climb aboard, another is sighted, then another. Each interaction is totally unique, an adventure in itself. The great explorer Jacques Costeau once admitted to seeing only two whale sharks in all of his seagoing adventures. After just two hours, our team clocks in 16 sharks and 10 interactions.

Explains our guide Lino Herrera: "We work extra-hard for our guests, who come by the thousands. Naturally, we want them to get their money's worth, so that they'll either leave Donsol with great memories or better yet—they'll be back next summer."

With more sightings being reported yearly, it's safe to say that we, and many others will return next season for another round with Sorsogon's plus-sized denizens.

Says Pine, "Donsol's decade-long success story is simply phenomenal. The benefits are shared both by man and fish. With encouraging results from ecotourism and their status as a protected species, it seems that at least for now, the fate of our butanding is assured."

(The author is the media officer of the WWF-Philippines)

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1. Intensify campaign against criminality particularly illegal drugs, prostitution, riots, cellphone snatching, etc., and improve rehabilitation center for drug dependents.
2. Stop collection of illegal taxes/fees nullified by the Supreme Court, and encourage investment thereby promoting economic growth and addressing unemployment problem.
3. Continue extending free college education and technical & vocational courses to deserving students of poor families.
4. Resume the giving of free medicine in all public hospitals and health centers to indigent patients, and the construction of modern hospitals in Districts 3 and 6.
5. Adopt effective measures to stop graft and corruption.
6. Revival of clean and green program, and preservation of historical sites.

AWARDS AND PLAQUES

1. Medal of Valor awarded by Brig. Gen Ricardo Papa, regarding the shooting encounter in 1959
2. Ten Outstanding Filipino Awardee (TOFIL) 1997
3. Chino Roces Award for "having pursued an uncompromising career against criminality"
4. Medal of Merit International Association of Lions Club, 1996
5. Doctorate on Public Administration, Honoris Causa, PLM, 1996
6. Doctorate in Criminology, Phil. College of Criminology, 1996
7. Doctorate on Public Administration, Honoris Causa, FEU, 1995
8. Gintong Ama Awardee for Government & Public Service, 1994
9. Dr. Jose P. Rizal Immortal Awardee, 1994
10. President Osmeña Most Outstanding Public Servant Award, 1992
11. Most Outstanding Law Enforcer-Consumers Union of the Philippines, 1990
12. First Ten Outstanding Policemen of the Philippines (TOPP) Hall of Fame Awardee, Philippine Jaycees, 1990 for being the first policemen to receive seven TOPP Awards
13. Plaque of Recognition by the Archdiocese of Manila for his commitment to honor and integrity in the performance of his duties despite overwhelming odds.

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"THE LAW APPLIES TO ALL... OTHERWISE, NONE AT ALL"

14. Integrated National Police (INP) Distinguished Conduct of Medal (Medalya ng Kabayanihan) 1988 for conspicuous courage & gallantry in suppressing the aborted coup d' etat on August 27, 1987
15. Outstanding Manileño for Public Service-Law Enforcement in 1986
16. Outstanding Achievement Medal for Professional Competence & Managerial Ability and Effectivity Foresight and Other Qualities, 1985
17. INP Efficiency Medal with Fourth Silver Star of Meritorious and Valuable Service during a successful rescue operation, 1983
18. INP Efficiency Medal with Third Silver Star of Meritorious and Valuable Service in the apprehension of a Hong Kong based International Syndicate engaged in the traffic of P17.5M Pesos worth of fake Documentary stramps and for refusing a bribe offer of P100,000
19. INP Efficiency Medal with Second Silver Star of Meritorious and Valuable Service rendered in a shooting encounter on May 1982
20. INP Efficiency Medal with First Silver Star of Meritorious and Valuable Service rendered during Operation Task Force Holy Father, 1981
21. INP Efficiency Medal with First Silver Star of Meritorious and Valuable Service rendered during encounter with 4 armed men at Muelle de Binondo, 1980
22. Citation Award from YMCA as Outstanding Sergeant (1961-1962)
23. Outstanding Achievement Medal awarded by the Minister of National Defense as PNPA Superintendent, 1985
24. More than 500 other plaques of appreciation, citation & commendation

PUBLIC SERVICE RECORD

- Elected Senator of the Republic of the Philippines, 2004 up to present
- Appointed Secretary of the Department of Interior and Local Government, January 8, 2000 to January 19, 2001.
- Re-elected Mayor of Manila, May 8, 1995 with the highest majority in the history of Manila Politics.
- Elected Mayor of Manila, May 11, 1992.
- Appointed Director of the National Bureau of Investigation (NBI), December 22, 1989 to March 20, 1992.
- Promoted Police Major General, October 1989 and retired as Chief of Police, December 21, 1989.
- Appointed Director of Western Police District, May 2, 1986.
- Appointed Director of Northern Police District, 5 January 1985 to 1986.
- Appointed Superintendent of PNPA, March 1984 to January 4, 1985.

EDUCATIONAL BACKGROUND

- Master in National Security Administration, graduated with honors, National Defense College of the Philippines (1981)
- Bachelor of Laws, University of the East, (1963)
- Bachelor of Business Administration, University of the East, (1951)
- High School, Far Eastern University, (1948)
- Elementary, P. Gomez Elementary School, (1943)

8 Pinoy workers back from Nigeria

By Tarra Quismundo

EIGHT FILIPINO CONSTRUCTION WORKERS held hostage by Nigerian militants arrived in Manila yesterday to emotional reunions with their families.

The former hostages were met at the Ninoy Aquino International Airport by Vice President Noli de Castro, and were seen hugging wives and other relatives and receiving bouquets of flowers from airport staff.

Engineers Ernesto Larosa, Bernard Pareja, Philip Rivera, Nelson Santias, and Fernando Santos, and welders Ronnie Aromin, Lowell Dollesin and Evan Fuentes were finally reunited with their families after being held for six days in a militant base in Port Harcourt, Nigeria.

The eight Filipino workers and three Korean executives were released on Wednesday by the Nigerian militants to their employer, Daewoo Engineering and Construction.

The former hostages were not sure whether any ransom was paid for their freedom.

25 Filipinos

About two months ago, 25 Filipinos were also seized in Nigeria in separate incidents, but were later freed and returned home.

"We don't know if the ransom was paid. All we know is that on the sixth day, they told us that we were being released," Larosa told a press conference upon their arrival at Naia Terminal 1.

"We don't know what happened. We were just told a day before were were released that we were going to be freed the next day. They brought us [to our employers]," said Rivera, the group's designated spokesperson.

The eight Filipinos were abducted along with three South Koreans by gunmen who raided their construction site in Nigeria's southern Rivers State.

"It was like a swamp, like a jungle with small islands... We were taken through a river on a motorboat, then they dumped us in one room. We can only sit or lie down and we were never allowed to stand up," Larosa told the INQUIRER.

The hostages said they were limited to a single meal per day, but denied reports they were physically beaten by their captors. *With AFP report*

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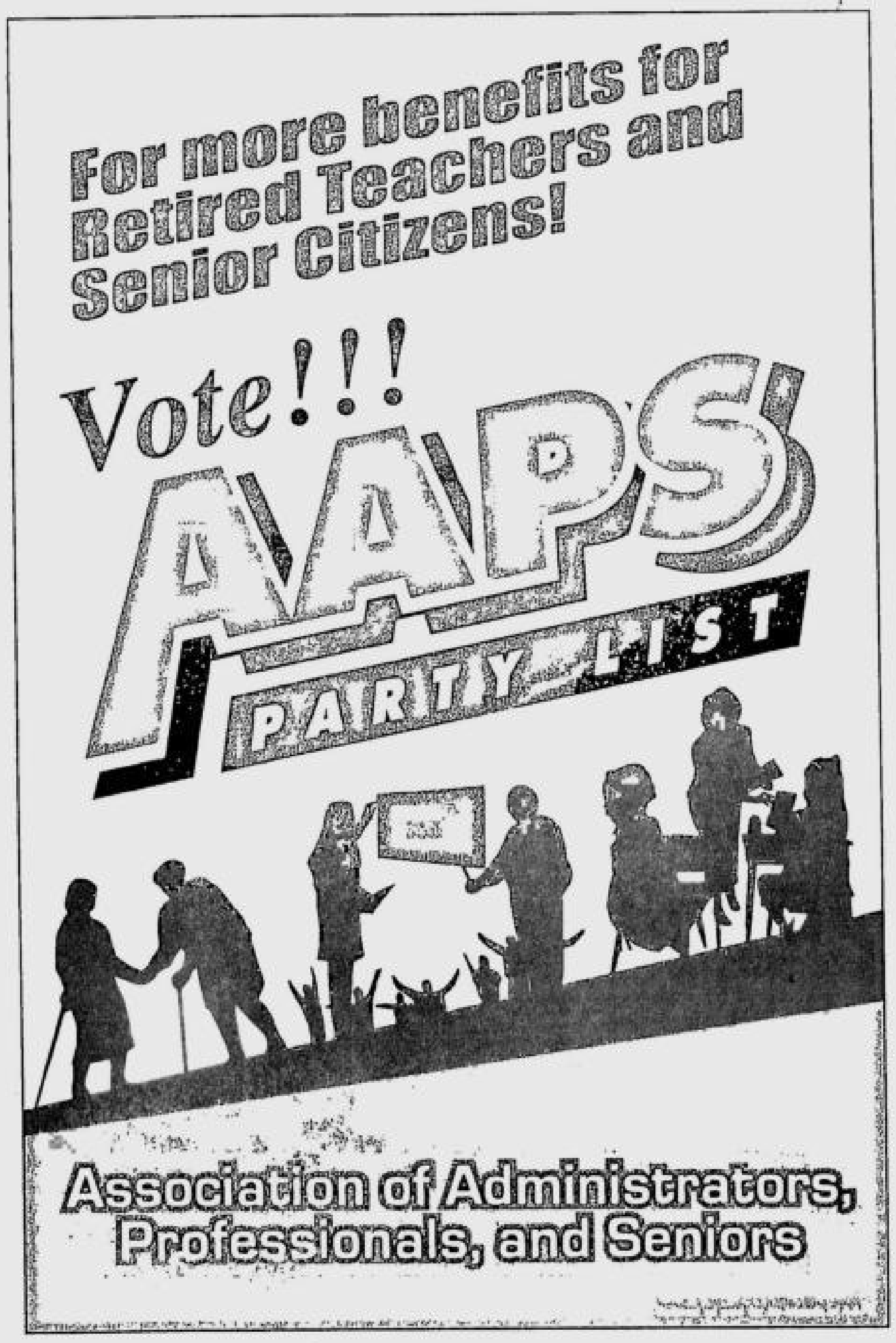
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Naantig na ba ang iyong puso sa kalagayan ng mga batang may autismo, cerebral palsy at iba pang mga kalagayang sumisikil sa kanilang mga kamalayan at pag-iisip?

Alam mo bang karamihan sa mga batang ito na itinuturing nating "special" at handicapped ay hindi nabibigyan ng angkop na pangangalaga upang makapamuhay ng maayos at marangal?

Kayang-kaya mo silang tulungan, kaibigan! Kayang-kaya mong itaguyod ang kanilang kapakanan!

Sa Mayo 14, 2007, **ASAHAN MO** ang iyong isulat sa balota para sa party list.

Ang **ASAHAN MO** ang pambansang kilusang magtataguyod sa mga karapatan at kapakanan ng mga handicapped at special children sa Kongreso.

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An open letter to my Countrymen

My Fellow Countrymen:

My decision to run against Speaker Jose de Venecia Jr. to represent the 4th district of Pangasinan in Congress must have come as a puzzle to most of you. The Speaker is an acknowledged master of compromise politics to achieve results in the national arena, a talent and mastery no other political leader of recent memory can equal.

In the local front, he is branded as a formidable Goliath, backed by a well-oiled machinery, overflowing money, formidable muscle, and the cunning ability to out scheme and maneuver his way by all means - ably supported by the administration in power.

Common sense dictates that I would benefit more if I simply stayed put as Dagupan City mayor or just step aside and give way to him as I did as a sitting Congressman in 2001.

At that time, like most other political leaders from Pangasinan, I believed that Joe DV could help turn a new leaf in the aftermath of the EDSA 2 Revolt of January 2001 that a handful of 79 brave Congressmen, including myself, initiated when we signed the impeachment complaint against then President Joseph "Erap" Estrada.

And he did reclaim the House Speakership and alongside with it was the renewed optimism of our provincemates for a repeat of a second resurgence of Pangasinan, following the presidency of Fidel V Ramos from 1992 to 1998, with the ascendancy of another Pangasinense as President in the person of Gloria Macapagal Arroyo.

But somewhere along the way, he fell short of the general expectations as the district and the province retrogressed in his six years as House Speaker despite the vaunted congressional funds at his commands and the reservoir of influence at his disposal.

While the usual infrastructure projects came in trickles over the years and massively now in the last 90 days in the barangays, a basic question must be asked: Did these projects really make a difference in the lives of his constituents?

While Cebu, Cavite, Batangas, Bulacan, Subic and Clark have moved forward. Pangasinan, sad to say, was left far behind with no new big ticket investments and real economic programs to come Pangasinan's way in the last six years.

One classic example was the stalled Bangus Processing Plant which I earlier envisioned to market Pangasinan's premier milkfish product to the world and at the same time could have created new economic opportunities for our people. All these years, this pet project received only empty promises and rhetoric from the Speaker – the latest of which was the purported funding from a foreign international agency.

Joe de V, as most Filipinos know him today, is the exact symbol of what is wrong with Philippine politics, one of the major reasons of what went wrong with our country, and why we have not progressed as a province and a nation. He is the living image of what traditional politics is all about.

I honestly believe that this politics of wizardry and leadership by promises must now end. The people of Pangasinan, particularly our district, owe it to the country and the Filipino people to cast away the politics of 'bola-bola, pera-pera,' patronage and greed. It is our patriotic duty to the coming generations to uproot the basic cause of our trepidation so that that this nation can finally move forward.

Going through this decision to fight JDV was not easy. Out of respect for our elders and those whom I considered as my second parents, I entertained the idea of a possible compromise. However, as I listened to the voice of my conscience and the clamor of the people and after thorough discernment guided by the Almighty, I have placed myself at His disposal and followed the desire of my heart and vowed to the collective wishes of the silent majority, which is to challenge JDV.

Thus, I humbly submit myself as the alternative and younger leader representing the 4th congressional district of Pangasinan.

Throughout my life, I have always decided on what I believe is right in the best interest of our country and our people. Oftentimes, I had to draw the line despite pressures from political allies and advice from close relatives and friends notwithstanding.

In arriving at this hard decision, I could only look back to critical situations in the life of our nation, when, as a private citizen, a businessman, and a public servant – I was called upon to make THE RIGHT PRINCIPLED CHOICE.

In May 1987, during the first national elections after EDSA People Power Revolution unseated a dictator in February 1986, as a Jaycee leader of the city of Dagupan, I chaired the National Movement for Free Elections (NAMFREL) quick count operations in Pangasinan and unofficially counted 98.5 percent of all ballots cast in just two days. Our group of volunteers helped insure the sanctity of the people's choice.

When the killer earthquake devastated Dagupan City in 1990, I did not only join the many involved in rescue and relief operations, but more importantly, led the local business community in rebuilding Dagupan from ruins through the Economic Reconstruction Group (ERG) and the support of fellow Jaycees from all over the country as I was then serving as JCP national president.

Firmly believing that then Defense Secretary Fidel Ramos would make an excellent President in 1992, I again defied convention and joined his small bandwagon as provincial campaign manager with shouts of "Natan Labat, Pangasinan." In his six years as President, Ramos moved this country forward to a tiger cub economy and brought the country out of darkness from the daily 12-hour brownouts in the early '90s.

Aside from being one of the 79 solons who signed the impeachment complaint against President Estrada, I was also part of the brave Pangasinenses who launched the 'Agco La Movement' which now became part of the historic EDSA 2 Revolt in 2001.

But the Philippines turned from bad to worse during the 2004 national elections when systematic cheating of unprecedented magnitude changed the true result of the elections. It showed the dark side of this administration, that it stops at nothing to keep itself in power.

Sadly, as the records would show, Joe de V was an active party to the blatant prostitution of the Constitution starting from the 2004 presidential canvassing to the midnight proclamation of President Gloria-Macapagal Arroyo as the duly elected president in 2004.

As Speaker, he was the chief architect in the shameless suppression of the truth in the "Garci Tape" scandal. He also presided over the quashing of two impeachment proceedings against President Arroyo without the truth coming out.

Last December 2006, he engineered the dubious and shameful attempt by Congress to revise the Philippine Constitution all by members of the ruling coalition. It was a most shameful act that angered the vast majority of the Filipino people and a national shame at that. It was our worst moment as Pangasinenses, more being districtmates of JDV.

I always draw the line when the interest of the country is at stake. I was one of the few incumbent city mayors in the country and the only one in Pangasinan who publicly called for the resignation of Mrs. Arroyo in July 2005. I favored the quest for the truth behind grand scale cheating and other allegations of her betraying the public trust through impeachment proceedings, and vehemently opposed the De Venecia-led attempt to hastily rewrite the constitution without public consent.

I could not just cower in fear from those who at present wield vast powers over this nation to trample on the most basic rights of its citizens: the right to life, the right to select their leaders, the right to decent jobs and to ample food on their table.

Fight, I must and I should.

In 2001, I gave way to JDV for a reason. This time, I am fighting him for a cause.

But this is not only my personal war. It is yours too, particularly the young, who must now reclaim their birthright and must seize their future collectively now.

This coming elections is the fight of the young and for the unborn.

I am confident that not all can be bought by money and influence. I am not for sale, neither are the sovereign people of Dagupan and the fourth congressional district.

Ang Laban ni Big Brother ay Laban ng Bayan!

One man cannot win the war alone. But the vast majority voters of a district can make a big difference. Pag sama-sama, kayang kaya. Together, we can all make a difference and bring about a new morning to our province and our country.

With the blessings of the Almighty and my family, I offer myself anew as your representative.

May God bless us all!

BENJAMIN "BENJIE" S. LIM
PDP-Laban Congressional Candidate

Ang laban ni Benjie ay Laban ng Bayan!

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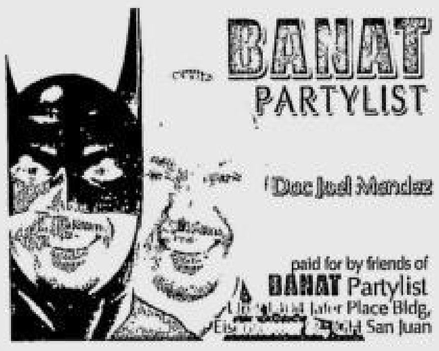

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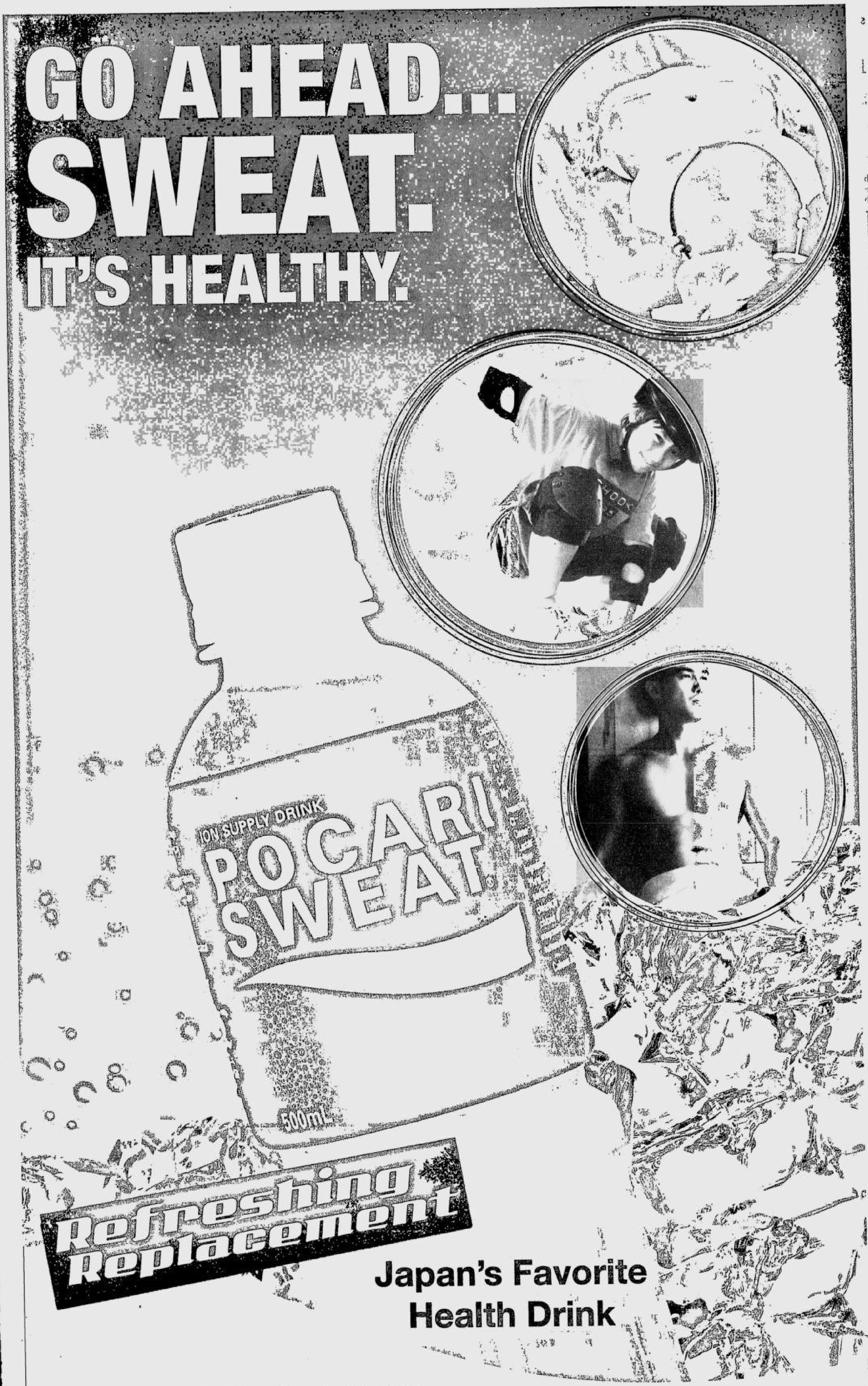
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Pacquiao scraps 'miting de avance' due to bomb threats

GEN. SANTOS CITY—MANNY Pacquiao, taking bomb threats seriously, decided to cancel his scheduled miting de avance last night at the Oval Plaza here.

"If it's only me I don't care, but I don't want to risk the lives of others," Pacquiao said in Filipino before joining his team to another campaign sortie in the city's barangays. "I can't forgive myself if something like that happens."

Pacquiao's decision was influenced by a similar incident in the 1992 national elections, when a grand rally by Lakas at the same venue was shattered by a grenade blast that left six persons dead and 52 wounded.

"We (local candidates) could have been wiped out and more people would have been hurt had the grenade intended to be thrown at the stage did not hit a streamer," said former Mayor Rosalita Nunez, who's trying to reclaim her post against incumbent Mayor Peter Acharon. "There's a big possibility that such dastardly act could be repeated."

Pacquiao also junked suggestions that the rally be held at a different venue other than the Oval Plaza, which could hold up to 50,000, saying it posts a similar danger.

Instead, Pacquiao, alternately riding on a white Chevrolet Suburban and a red Expedition backed by escorts in two other SUVs, a coaster and two motorcycles, opted for sorties in the city's major barangays. *Roy Luarca*

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All particulars relative to Eligibility Statement and Screening, Pre-Bid Conference, Evaluation of Bids, Post-Qualification and Award of Contract shall be governed by the pertinent provisions of R.A. 9184 and its Implementing Rules and Regulation (IRR).

The schedule of activities is listed, as follows:

Activities	*Schedule*
1. Issuance of Bid Documents	May 10, 2007 – May 25, 2007
2. Pre-Bid Conference	May 17, 2007 (2:30 pm)
3. Submission of Bids	May 29, 2007 (2:30 pm)
4. Opening of Bids	May 29, 2007 (2:30 pm onwards)

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PAGCOR reserves the right to accept or reject any Bid, and to annul the bidding process and reject all Bids at any time prior to contract award, without thereby incurring any liability to the affected bidder or bidders.

Please address all communications to the Branch Bids and Awards Committee, Branch Procurement & Property Office, Casino Filipino Pavilion, Tel. No.: 522-9433

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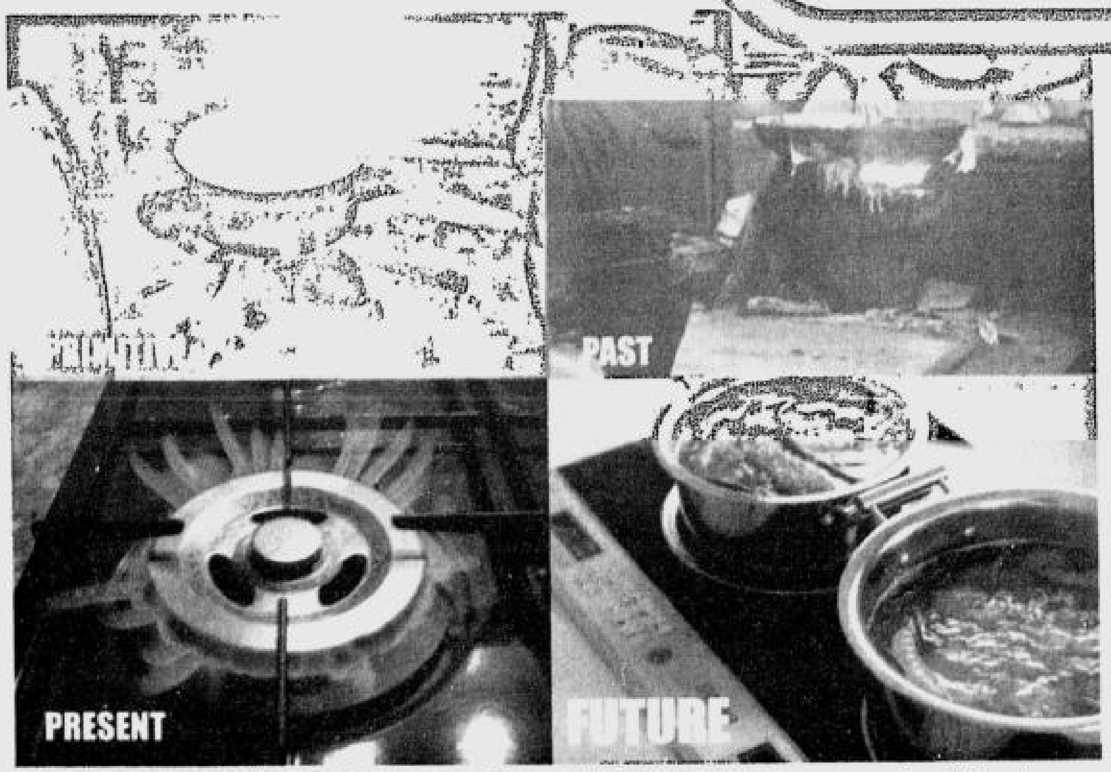

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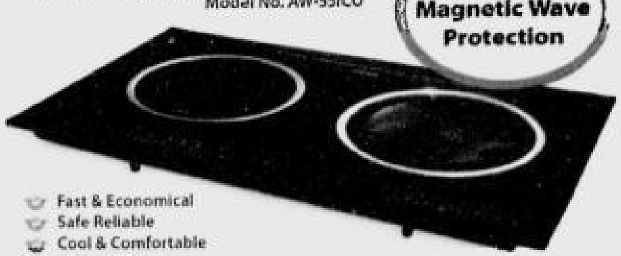

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OPINION

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No credibility

EDITORIALS

THE OTHER DAY, A DELEGATION OF ALLIED congressmen met with the President, their party leader, and proceeded to have what one of them described as "the most unvarnished conversation they've ever had with the President." At one point, one congressman said, "My district is prepared for defeat. We need candor, we need honesty."

No, it wasn't President Macapagal-Arroyo who was at the receiving end of such blunt advice. Instead, it was her ally, US President George W. Bush, and the subject of conversation was the continuing war in Iraq. But there is a lesson in that candid meeting even for Ms Arroyo.

Another member of that delegation of moderate Republicans told Bush: "The word about the war and its progress cannot come from the White House or even you, Mr. President. There is no longer any credibility. It has to come from Gen. (David) Petraeus." (Petraeus is the new American commander in Iraq.)

The lesson for President Arroyo is clear: Lack of credibility limits one's options severely. Growing public concern about the possibility of cheating in Monday's elections feeds on the President's crisis of legitimacy. Thus, the word about clean elections, about the non-existence of cheating operations, cannot come from Malacañang or even Ms Arroyo. It cannot come from the feckless chair of the Commission on Elections. "There is no longer any credibility."

The question is, does the administration have a Petraeus, someone relatively new, someone untainted, who can credibly promise free and fair elections?

No, thanks

RETIRED MILITARY OFFICERS HAVE REVEALED the existence of an elaborate cheating operation—designed, they say, to place three administration candidates for the Senate in the winning circle. "Oplan Mercury Rising," according to retired Commodore Ismael Aparri, would involve election fraud in four regions and 12 provinces, where some 14 million votes are in play.

Malacañang and the three candidates implicated have vigorously denied the accusation, with the Palace calling the alleged operation a hoax. Cabinet Secretary Ricardo Saludo, a former journalist, even criticized the media for reporting the accusation in the first place. "As I have said, the problem is, if you cannot tell if something is true or not, you have to examine it," Saludo griped. "You journalists, you know how to examine these kinds of reports, don't you?"

Now this is an interesting codicil to the basic journalistic contract. His years in government service have apparently caused Saludo to forget the basic dictum: names make news. Unfortunately for his theory, the names behind the disclosure are eminently newsworthy: they are retired general officers, not hiding behind the sometimes necessary cloak of anonymity, but holding forth freely, in a press briefing they themselves called to introduce Bantay Boto, a new anti-election fraud coalition. In other words, the identity of the "accuser" made the accusation worth hearing.

Saludo's idea that media organizations hold off on all stories when "you cannot tell if something is true or not" would wreak havoc, if applied to government pronouncements, on the entire policymaking process and even on public discourse. If, say, the President repeats her startling assertion that the country's decent GNP performance in the last six years amounts to an economic miracle, by Saludo's own unique standard the announcement won't qualify as news at all.

Besides, Saludo mistakenly concluded that news organizations, in judging the news value of the Bantay Boto disclosure, did not verify the claim. He should remember another cardinal rule from his newsroom days: Context is all.

The context of Bantay Boto's disclosure is disturbing. Retired military generals seeking to prevent a repeat of the alleged "special operations" in 2004 that weakened their beloved Armed Forces: check. A junking of last year's landmark covenant to insulate the military from election politics: check. Shameless use of the chain of command to force soldiers to vote for administration candidates: check. Continued operation of election manipulators: check. Availability of unlimited government resources for special operations: check. And so on and so forth.

Perhaps Saludo needs his own copy of this chilling checklist.

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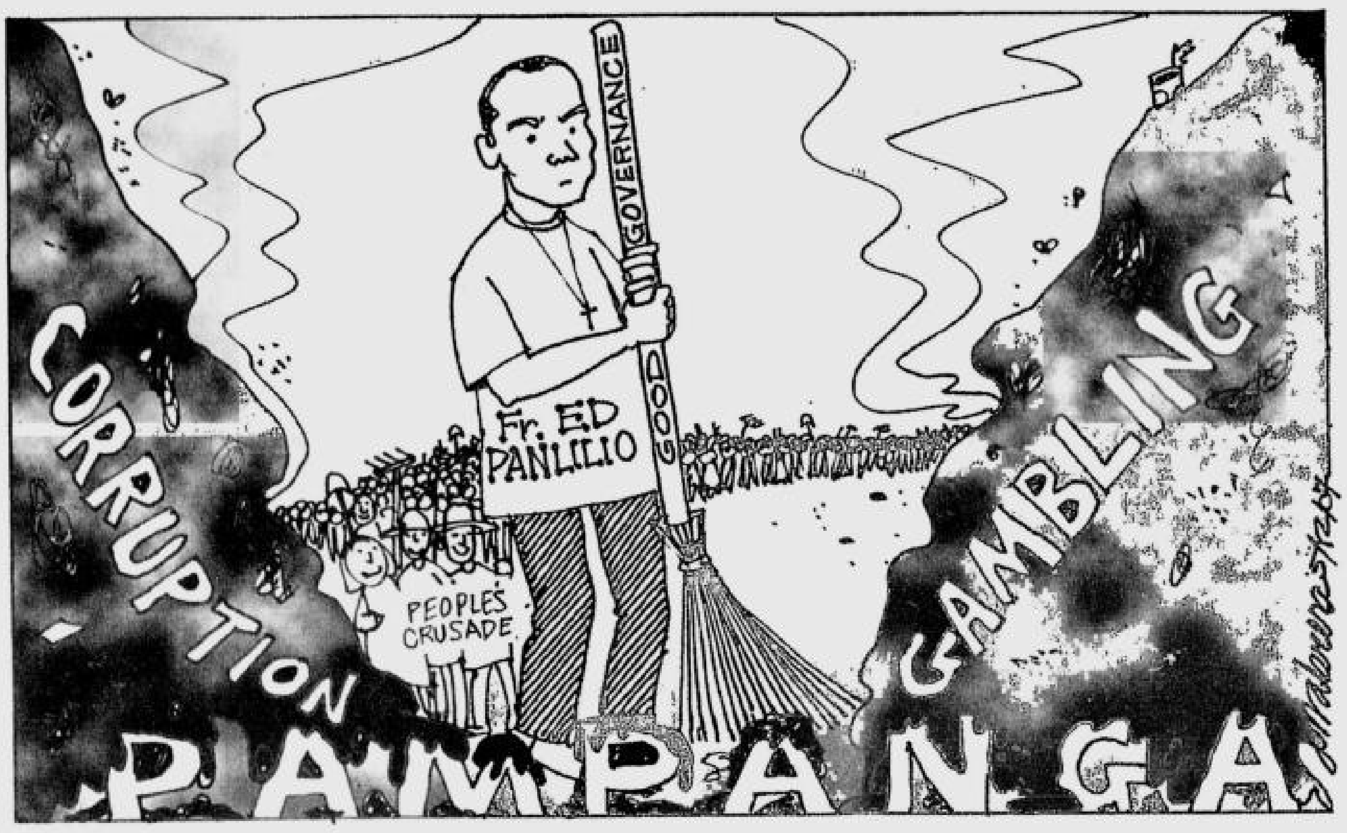

The unsullied and independent ballot

SEPARATE OPINION

Isagani A. Cruz

I TEND TO ASSOCIATE THE RIGHT OF suffrage to my recollection of the long lines of South Africans in 1994 who were photographed by the international media as they patiently waited for hours in the sweltering sun for their turn to vote for Nelson Mandela. Their candidate had finally been released from the life sentence imposed on him by the white supremacist masters for resisting the apartheid policy that had held the black population of his country in bondage.

By electing him as their first President from their own race, his countrymen, long deprived of the right to participate freely in the conduct of their government, overwhelmingly affirmed their confidence in the great leader who would finally usher for them a freer life delivered at last from the injustices and intolerance of the past.

The people of South Africa offer a proud example to all oppressed nations. Fittingly, they won their liberation not by force of arms in the barricades of civil war but through the peaceful instrument of the ballot. Like them, we in this country should learn to use the right to vote as a sharper weapon than its desecration in the forging of our future with our own efforts and decisions.

This right had been denied us by the Spaniards who kept us benighted for more than three centuries, begrudged by the Americans who did not share with us the democracy of Jefferson and Lincoln, dismissed by the Japanese who ruled us by the deadly *katanga* during the Pacific War, and ridiculed by Ferdinand Marcos himself, a Filipino like us except in his greed for power that betrayed his own people with the iniquities of martial law.

During those dreadful episodes in our history when our lives were controlled by tyrants, suffrage was a legitimate but muted desire to mold our country's destiny as we saw fit according to our aspirations and traditions. Rizal espoused it in La Liga Filipina; Bonifacio established it in the Katipunan. Thousands of our heroic forebears offered their lives to pursue their elusive dream of a republican regime mandated by the will of the majority through the immaculate ballot.

It was early in the last century that, with the guarded tolerance of the United States as our colonial ruler, the prize was originally glimpsed with the new group of young Filipino legislators headed by Sergio Osmeña and Manuel L. Quezon. It began with the national elections for the members of the Philippine Assembly in 1906, continued with the organization of the Philippine Legislature in 1916, and victoriously inaugurated the Commonwealth of the Philippines in 1935. By the time we became a republic in 1946, suffrage had already become a permanent fixture in the political life of our country.

In the beginning, most of the masses voted as directed by the *hacenderos* upon whom their livelihood depended in the feudal fiefdoms that soon became powerful bailiwicks the politicians took care to promote and protect. Ironically, the supposedly democratic country was ruled by the rich and powerful and not the common people. It took Ramon Magsaysay, himself one of them, to emancipate them from their vassalage and convinced them that they were all thinking individuals who could and should make up their own minds as free Filipino citizens.

Unfortunately, that revolution of the masses, as it was then called, died with him in the tragic plane crash on Mount Manunggal in 1957. Before long, the irregularities committed in the 1947 plebiscite on the proposed Parity Amendment and in the 1949 presidential election had returned with gold and goons, falsified election returns, *dagdag-bawas* operations, harassment of opposition candidates, unconstitutional checkpoints, unpunished Garci tactics, and other election anomalies that have debased the ballot as the authentic expression of the sovereign will of the Philippine electorate.

It is regrettable that the principal culprit in the violation of our election laws was—and still is—no less than the Commission on Elections itself. Nevertheless, while its offenses are enormous and apparently forbidding, it still has the capacity to redeem itself and correct its shortcomings with its own political act of contrition. This it can do by simply exercising the necessary vigilance, intelligence and courage in the performance of its assigned task to insure the holding of "free, orderly, honest, peaceful and credible elections" as envisioned by the Constitution.

The Commission on Elections can be the conscience of the country that can release us from the clutches of ignorance, cowardice, avarice, *pakikisama*, idolatry of entertainers, political dynasties and other vices that have cheapened the precious right of suffrage to a negotiable commodity for the elevation to public office of unworthy candidates obsessed only with their own vainglory and not the promotion of the common weal. But can it risk this dangerous role?

As the nation goes to the polls on Monday, let us all pray that the elections will reflect the true and perceptive will of the Filipino people as expressed for them by the qualified voters in the unsullied and independent ballot.

Choices for the Senate

GET REAL

Solita Collas-Monsod

WHOM WILL I VOTE FOR ON MAY 14 IN the senatorial race? I have been asked this question a number of times, privately and in public fora, and I have never fobbed off the questioner with one of those coy sanctity-of-the-ballot/I-will-vote-according-to-my-conscience-and-that-is-personal remarks. I figure a straight, good-faith question deserves a straight, good-faith answer.

At the outset, I was only sure that I would vote for the three Kapatiran candidates: Bautista, Paredes and Sison. Why them? Partly as a conscience vote—they unabashedly stand for principles and morals, which are in seriously short supply among our political leaders; and partly as a protest vote—against the politicians who change alliances like underwear, and who are very definite about what (or rather who) they are against, but are vague about what they are for.

At that point, I was more certain about whom I would not vote for. For example, I would never vote for anyone who participated in, or is in favor of, overthrowing the government violently, whether from the Right or the Left, no matter how charming, good-looking, or sincere-sounding, no matter how irritated I am at the powers-that-be. It is beyond me how anyone can even defend their stand, and to anybody who tells me that any government has to be better than Gloria's government, just take a gander at what is happening to Thailand.

In other words, to be on my list, one had to show a commitment to democracy, warts and all. As far as I am concerned, living under any form of authoritarianism is far worse than living under a flawed democracy.

But what other standards would I measure the candidates against? For those who were (or are) legislators, I wanted to look at their voting record, or at least their stance on issues which I consider major—ranging from those where the interests of Lucio Tan and other business moguls were affected to the impeachment moves against Aniano Desierto, Luzviminda Tancangco and Hilario Davide Jr., to the parliamentary vs. presidential system question, to family planning. But this was a dead end; information was sparse. Moreover, where there was available information, it was soon clear that I would not be able to increase my list; someone who passed with flying colors on one issue would fail miserably on the other.

So I fell back on Plan B, which I thought would be as close to an objective measure as one could get, with the added advantage that the information would be easy to obtain: the list of proposed legislation of national significance they sponsored or authored and which were enacted into law. This would help answer the question: When they were in a position to do so, did they do anything that redounded to the welfare of the Filipino people, so that they deserve either reelection or promotion (from the House to the Senate)?

Under this criterion, a Sen. Edgardo Angara is a shoo-in. The number of laws of which he was either principal author or sponsor and which have contributed significantly to public welfare (in other words, not just quantity, but quality) arguably puts him head and shoulders above his colleagues in the legislature: agriculture modernization, health insurance, education rationalization and subsidies, senior citizen benefits, additional safety nets, senior citizens' pension system improvements, credit system improvements. The pluses in his ledger are enough to overcome the minuses against him. The Social Weather Stations' latest survey puts him on the 11th slot, but it would be more accurate to say, like the Pulse Asia does, that he is in the 5-12 bracket—that is to say, there is no significant difference in the percentage of "votes" obtained by the candidates who occupy the 5th to the 12th position in the survey rankings.

One of the eye-openers from the dossiers was that Tessie Aquino-Oreta performed well both as a representative and as a senator, in terms of legislative accomplishments, mostly in education, but also for women: the establishment of barangay day care centers, early childhood care and development, the Philippine Science High School System, Government Assistance to Students and Teachers in Private Education (GASTPE), governance of basic education, science and technology. Unfortunately, these were overshadowed by that dance, but in my book the dance (for which she has apologized) can't hold a candle to what she has done. She is on my list.

The other eye-opener was the total lack of legislative accomplishments of some of the other candidates: Nine years of being in the House of Representatives or six years of being in the Senate, and not a single (nationally significant) law to show for it! All that sound and fury, signifying nothing—at least as far as legislation is concerned.

At any rate, as of now, I have nine on my list, including Sonia Roco (on the same basis as I have included the Kapatiran candidates: she represents moral rectitude as well as intelligence). Who are the other three? I will not mention their names, other than to say that either they are more than just mouths, or they have taken for the most part principled, as opposed to blindly partisan, stands.

Is it possible that by election day, I would have a complete list of 12? I don't discount the possibility. Those interested in more information on the candidates, try www.gmanews.tv/eleksyon2007, or call Gabay Halalan at 10149 (toll free). I will be doing that over the weekend.

New style of cheating can be done by both sides

Political Tidbits

Belinda Olivares-Cunanan

SINCE I HADN'T WATCHED A SINGLE BIG RALLY this campaign season, I decided to fly to Cebu City for Team Unity's grand rally at Puente Osmeña. The historic circle was almost unrecognizable, as every inch of it was festooned with candidates' streamers. Rally host Mayor Tommy Osmeña, with the help of the city's two reelectionist representatives, Raul del Mar and Antonio Cuenco, delivered a low estimate of 15,000 people. President Macapagal-Arroyo, who inaugurated some projects in Bohol and southern Cebu, couldn't make it to the rally as she was down with flu and diarrhea, and stayed all night being administered dextrose in Malacañang sa Sugbu. All the TU senatorial candidates were enthusiastically cheered, but of course the Cebuano-speaking candidates, such as Migz Zubiri and Cesar Montano, had the edge with the roaring crowds. Also presented were Osmeña's candidates for the city council, all dressed in black shirts, led by the vice mayor.

* * *

Cebu politics remains fascinating as ever. Osmeña hosted that big TU rally even as his older brother, Sen. Serge Osmeña, runs the Genuine Opposition where their cousin, John Osmeña, is a senatorial candidate. In Cebu, forces allied with the GMA coalition are fighting each other at the provincial level, but it's GO versus Kampi at the local level. Reelectionist Gov. Gwen Garcia founded One Cebu Party two years ago to fight the partitioning of Cebu, and eventually her entire family, including her father, former Gov. Pabling Garcia, who once chaired Lakas, moved over to Kampi. Gwen and her running mate Greg Sanchez are battling Lakas gubernatorial candidate Rep. Antonio Yapha and his running mate, Rep. Clavel Martinez. Though Gwen is hounded by demands to account for the P650 million spent on the Cebu International Convention Center, her reelection is virtually assured, and so with Clavel's. Thus, Cebu could end up with two strong women at the capitol who don't get along well.

* * *

There's a marked contrast between two bets from the same family. GO senatorial bet Noynoy Aquino seems to be forever clinging to the skirts of his mother, former President Cory Aquino, and sister Kris Aquino. Now he warns in his TV ad that there's a plot to remove him and another GO candidate from the winning slots and he pleads with people to help him guard his votes. These images make Noynoy look wimpy, and the question that comes to mind is, is this young man ready for the big job? By contrast, his aunt, Teresa Aquino-Oreta, has chosen to tackle her weakness, which was her reputation as the "dancing queen," in a more manly (for lack of a better word) manner by talking directly to the people about it and apologizing for her lapse of judgment. That took a lot of guts, and Oreta looks and sounds like courageous Ninoy's sister. People are taking a serious second look at her.

* * *

Speaker Joe de Venecia, running for reelection in Pangasinan's 4th district, was reported in the media to be "running scared" against his opponent, Dagupan Mayor Benjie Lim. I asked JDV about this and he quipped, "Yes, I am scared—that I might not reach 98 percent versus 2 percent for Lim." JDV said two recent surveys put him at 81 percent against 19 percent for Lim and 78 percent against 22 percent for Lim. Apparently Lim senses impending defeat and he has been heard saying that if people cannot vote for him, they can just vote for his son Brian, who's running against the immensely popular *balik*-mayor Al Fernandez.

Lim appears to be hounded by bad luck. Aside from the three corruption cases pending against him before the Ombudsman from his stint as chief of the tourist duty-free shop, reports say some canned goods his people had given away made some folks sick. The Comelec has also dismissed for lack of merit his charge that distribution of accident insurance cards is against election laws. JDV insists that Lakas has been distributing these cards to its volunteers and members across the country since October last year.

To show he's unperturbed, JDV says he has began devoting 15 minutes of each campaign day to drafting the legislative program of the 14th Congress. In the meantime, some 230 student volunteers from Metro Manila, the Visayas and Mindanao, of various faiths in the World Federation for Peace, have pitched tent on JDV's lawn or stay in various supporters' homes to campaign house-to-house for him.

* * *

There's a lot of talk about cheating in the elections, and various commentators and the opposition allege that the administration will cheat. But as Namfrel's Damaso Magbual stressed recently, in recent elections cheating has veered away from the traditional ballot box-snatching, vote-buying and terrorizing by goons. Nowadays it seems largely confined to tampering with the certificates of canvass at the provincial level by some unscrupulous Comelec personnel—for the right price. Opposition Sen. Rodolfo Biazon confirmed this when he opined that the going rate in some parts of Mindanao is P25 million for every one million votes.

What makes this new style of cheating different is that candidates from different parties can resort to it, provided they have plenty of funds. It's no secret that among the heaviest spenders in this campaign are some opposition bets.

* * *

The stress on cheating is obviously to condition people's minds, so that if the actual results veer away from the survey results favoring the opposition, the people would be agitated and revolt. But what critics don't play up are indisputable realities, as TU senatorial bet Prospero Pichay stressed to me in Cebu: that the GMA coalition dominates in 196 out of the 212 congressional districts, while the opposition has fielded candidates in only 20 percent of local positions; that the 24 city mayors and 237 municipal mayors running unopposed are working full-time for TU.

Vote for the four women

At Large

Rina Jimenez-David

PERHAPS THIS MOTHER'S DAY WEEKEND IS AS good a time as any to honor our foremothers. At the launching of the "Eminent Women in Politics" lecture series, Miriam College president Tatti Licuanan said she at first wondered if the current campaign season was the right time to launch the series, a project of Miriam's Women and Gender Institute and the Senate, in observance of the 70th anniversary of the passage of the women's suffrage law.

But on reflection, she acknowledged, the midterm election season, which culminates on Monday, is indeed the right time "to reaffirm the role and contributions of women, and the heroism of the suffragists" who scoured the nation in 1937 to win 447,725 votes in a plebiscite to affirm women's right to vote. (Only 300,000 votes were required.)

Speaking at the series launch was former Sen. Leticia Ramos-Shahani, who used the framework of "family and history" to trace her own education in partisan politics and glean lessons which other women contemplating a foray into politics could use.

Shahani traces her political roots to her father, former Assemblyman Narciso Ramos. "He had a profound influence in my life," she attests, foremost of which was his decision to abandon politics in favor of diplomacy, the offshoot of what she calls "the anxieties of a family whose breadwinner was an honest politician." It was her father, Shahani recalls, who stated what has become a pithy testament on Philippine politics: "Politics is the main industry of the Philippines, unfortunately it is a non-productive industry."

Though she considers herself "a politician by accident," Shahani says that upon her first election to the Senate, she asked herself "for whom and what for" she was in office. It was then that she realized that "my life experience prepared me to focus on women's issues." Thus, she was able to concentrate on legislation for women's rights, including two landmark laws re-defining rape and providing for the establishment of rape crisis centers.

* * *

WHILE Shahani makes for a great role model for all women thinking of entering politics and engaging in public life, fortunately we also have four women currently in the running for the Senate who can on their own set new legislative records in service of women's empowerment.

When I tell friends and family that I'm voting for all four women—Nikki Coseteng, Loren Legarda, Tessie Aquino-Oreta and Sonia Roco (note the alphabetical order)—reactions vary from shock and incredulity to skepticism and cynicism.

The strongest reaction is to Oreta, the most common statement being: "You mean you can forgive her dancing?" Jokingly, I say, "If Spider Man can forgive Sandman for the death of Uncle Ben, then why can't we?" But really now, why can't we? She has had the grace to at least apologize in a TV ad for her actuations (though someone quipped that she should have done it before she decided to run for the Senate), which is more than I can say for both of her political patrons (you know who you are).

But the reason TAO gets my vote is that her legislative record as a congresswoman and senator, particularly the bills on violence against women, including rape, and on children's rights and early childhood development.

* * *

A GLANCE at the legislative record of the two other "returning" candidates—Legarda and Coseteng—would reveal their own support (at varying levels) for "women's" legislation, even if doing so could mark them as "just" women legislators, and somehow less competent as their male colleagues.

That was precisely the problem of women who swept into political office soon after the first Edsa Revolt. Many of them first-timers, they confessed to feeling they had to first "earn their spurs" as representatives of a general constituency, and that championing women's issues might limit their influence and appeal.

But that was in the past, and women in both the House of Representatives and the Senate have in the years since been able to pass women-friendly laws and turn the legislature into women-friendly environments.

And while this may be Sonia Roco's first foray into politics, she is no neophyte, having worked alongside her husband in all his campaigns and legislative work. She is widely credited for having pushed for the passage of the Women in Nation Building Law, which Raul Roco sponsored (as a congressman), and which has opened doors for women in business and the economy.

And that is why I am voting for all four women. Loren Legarda does not seem to need any more support as she currently tops the list of "senatoriables," but sadly, Coseteng, Aquino-Oreta and Roco are struggling. I'd just like to ask you to imagine what the Senate would be like if all four women managed to make it. Just as, for that matter, we should imagine just what kind of senators the late Haydee Yorac and Winnie Monsod would have been. It's too late for regrets, but we can still vote more women to the Senate, to the House and to local posts.

* * *

LET me put in a word, as well, for Abanse! Pinay, which, according to the Social Weather Stations, is just on the threshold of the "Magic 20" party-list groups assured of getting at least one seat in the House of Representatives.

Going by Abanse's track record, particularly in the two terms served by former Rep. Pat Sarenas, the party-list group has proven the value of a party focused on the concerns of women, while at the same time working on the passage of laws for the uplift of society and the pursuit of good governance.

But even if you do not share Abanse! Pinay's advocacy, just make sure you don't leave the slot for party list blank. The party-list vote is our chance to right the balance of power in the legislature. Don't waste this chance.

Sarkozy's French lessons

World View

Michel Rocard

FRANCE HAS CHOSEN, AND IT HAS CHOSEN decisively. The next French president will be Nicolas Sarkozy, elected with 53.1 percent of the popular vote, with turnout, at 84.8 percent, the highest since 1981. This election is particularly rich in lessons.

France was said to be to be a country mired in apathy and increasingly uninterested in politics. For the last 20 years, the number of citizens who registered to vote had been declining and the number of registered voters who stayed home had been increasing. Among those who voted, the number who cast their votes for the parties of the extreme Right or the extreme Left—that is, parties unsuited for government—was steadily rising.

All this changed in the two rounds of this year's election. The first lesson, then, is that France is re-politicizing. With voter turnout beating all European records, France's new president will have unusually strong legitimacy.

Second, and equally important, the extremist vote is weakening. Support for Jean-Marie Le Pen's quasi-fascist National Front fell from 18 percent in 2002 to 10 percent this time around, representing an important gain in democratic stabilization. Likewise, the extreme Left, which together put up six presidential candidates, was annihilated politically. Only the Trotskyite candidate received more than 4 percent of the vote, while the rest—including the French Communist party, which for more than 30 years received a stable 20 percent of the vote—gained less than 2 percent. It is the end of an adventure that was not at all good for France.

The third key feature of the election was the emergence of a centrist constituency seeking to distinguish—indeed, separate—itself from the Right. This is a critical development in France. The brave candidate of the new center, François Bayrou, managed to triple his support relative to 2002, gaining 17 percent of the vote, although this was not enough to place him in the second round.

It was still too early in terms of the development of French political culture for the formation of an alliance between Bayrou and Socialist candidate Ségolène Royal—a proposal that I made before the elections. The absence of an agreement between Royal and Bayrou to back the first-round winner in the run-off with Sarkozy largely explains the ultimate defeat of both.

But this is understandable. Historically, the Socialist Party has no tradition of coalition governments, much less of looking for coalition partners to its right. That day will come, but its arrival will require more time.

The fourth lesson follows from Sarkozy's stance as a classical ultra-liberal. While he is very French in his upbringing and education (he does not speak English!), he is nevertheless neither a Jacobin nor a Gaullist. Indeed, the Gaullist tradition ends with him.

Sarkozy made public his disagreement with outgoing President Jacques Chirac about the French position against the American-led war in Iraq. President George W. Bush, who was the first to congratulate Sarkozy, has a new ally in Europe. Sarkozy believes in the efficiency of markets and will shy away from state intervention in the economy. He will thus contribute to a reconciliation of the hitherto nationalist French Right and modern conservatism as it is practiced elsewhere.

The fifth lesson may be the most serious. The French Left, represented by the Socialists, has suffered its third consecutive defeat in a presidential election. Given the erosion of the right's power and Sarkozy's not very attractive personality, the road was wide open for the Socialists to win.

The disastrous failure of the Left has many causes. But the most important one, in my view, was the absence of a clear strategy on the part of the Socialists, who consistently refuse to make the choices that have gradually been accepted by international social democracy, embodied today in the Party of European Socialists. The international Left has opted for a reformist course, including, where necessary, coalition governments with centrist partners. The reformist option fully accepts the internationalization of today's market economy.

The French Socialist Party's lingering statism, ethnocentrism and reluctance to accept coalitions with movements to its right reflects its violent and troubled history and the long intellectual domination of the French communists. But these features constitute an obstacle to the Socialists' becoming the party of government, and were reflected in their electoral program, which was full of uncertainty and indifference with respect to Europe and the broader international context. The voters did not find it credible.

This lesson is so evident that the French Socialist Party now face a clear choice. Either it modernizes its program to come closer to international social democracy, or it enters a period of slow and prolonged decline. The Socialists now have no choice but to engage in a debate that is certain to be loud and contentious. But the outcome is far less clear.

Project Syndicate

Michel Rocard is a former prime minister of France and leader of the Socialist Party and is currently a member of the European Parliament.

Perfect mom

Young Blood

Divine Love A. Salvador

We want to know what the young are thinking about. What are their thoughts on current issues? We welcome contributions from the twentysomething and below.—Ed.

MY MOTHER WAS UP EARLY THAT SUNDAY MORNING cooking food for 30 people. She had celebrated her birthday a few days earlier, so the pastor of the small church she and my father were attending requested her to cook lunch for the post-service fellowship. Apparently, that was the pastor's idea of a birthday gift—a strange one—but mother did not seem to mind.

When I woke up, she was well into cooking the first of two viands on her menu, *giniling*, or ground pork, potatoes, carrots and raisins stewed in a proudly Filipino combination of 1 part tomato sauce, 10 parts ketchup. The pot was already simmering and the sauce was beginning to thicken as I made my way downstairs, still sleepy but determined to offer my mother some help.

I had been strangely anxious about her latest project. For some unexplained reason, I did not feel that my mother was up to the task. Two nights before, I had badgered her about the lack of a menu. I could see in her eyes that she wasn't bothered by it, and that alarmed me. Cooking for 30 potentially judgmental Baptists wasn't adding a wrinkle to her remarkably smooth 50-something face. She assured me she already had a simple menu planned: *giniling*, which she was going to cook, and chicken lollipops, ordered from her caterer-friend.

The fact that she was going to cook only one viand eased my discomfort somewhat. Until the next day, when she announced that her friend was out of town. It meant my mother was going to have to wing the chicken wings.

That was why I was up earlier than usual that morning, ready to be the wind beneath her wings. But my mother was already flying high all by herself. She had everything under control; there was no need for wind. The robust, meaty smell that greeted my nose as I went into the kitchen told me the *giniling* was going to be a hit. The chicken wings were already breaded and waiting for the oil to heat, and the rice was already cooked white and fluffy. All I had to do was make the *sawsawan* for the chicken, which I did with much gladness and no small amount of relief.

An hour later, the wings were fried and arranged on a large serving dish. There was even an extra plateful. My mother had cooked as if a great famine was going to sweep across the land. She had pulled through. Without breaking into much of a sweat, she was able to cook enough food for 30 Baptists, with something extra for her family.

So instead of helping my mother, what I did was become a kid again, sitting in the kitchen, greasing up my mouth and fingers with my mom's crispy, crunchy chicken lollipops. All the while, I gushed to my sister about what a culinary genius our mom was. "She didn't need my help," I crowed. "She did it all by herself." I sounded not unlike mothers who are seeing their babies walk unaided for the first time.

Later, I would find out from my father that the Baptists also loved the food. All judgments were positive, all comments glowing.

As I sat at the table, licking my chicken-flavored fingers, chicken bones littering the space in front of me, I wondered why I ever doubted my mother's skill and panache. It's not like cooking for 30 Baptists was the hardest thing she had ever done in her life. Yet, somehow, I had forgotten the various feats of parenting she had performed to raise three willful, independent, slightly smart and, therefore, considerably condescending daughters. This was my mother who, among other things taught us the difference between the "p" and the "f" sounds (a difficulty for many Filipinos), cooked the best chicken macaroni *sopas*, and even made ham and *tocino* herself instead of buying them in the market.

When I was younger, such doubts would never have entered my mind. My heart would have told my mind to believe and my mind would have done so. But I am not as young as I used to be. I carry inside me almost three decades' worth of questions and the illusion that at least some of these have answers. The thing with asking questions, though, is that it requires an admission of the temporality of suppositions. What we believe today flies in the face of what we held true yesterday. Certainty is a ship with holes trying, nevertheless, to stay afloat in a sea of ambiguity.

It is not that I know more than I did when I was younger. It is that I doubt more and, therefore, believe less. In the case of my mother, it had been a long time since I took her word without checking with other sources. Like all children, I started out believing firmly that there wasn't much she couldn't do. Not that I thought she was perfect, but I never thought she was imperfect. Her imperfections existed, yes, but they did so outside of my mind and, therefore, they never crossed it. The end result was the same: my mother, as with all mothers, might as well have been perfect. Her word always seemed final.

But like all children, I got older and started to grow my own mind. The illusion of maternal perfection gradually dissolved to reveal my mother as just another flawed human like myself, and her word as just another hypothesis to be tested.

There are times when I wonder how it must be like to be a mother. (I am not one, and I probably won't be for a while.) What I imagine is that motherhood is an exercise in heartbreak. Human development proceeds from a state of relative ignorance and innocence to one of (at least, ostensible) knowledge and awareness. It is the gradual replacement of wonder with unbelief, awe with indifference. The heart thrives on people's ability to be pleased. We begin our lives with this ability but we lose it steadily as we learn more, know more. Knowledge is power, the power to be fastidious. And the fastidious mind breaks hearts.

To be a mother, then, is to be the object of opinions that are bound to change. The evolution of Mother, from the child's changing perspective, is from one who can do no wrong to one who can do no right. From supreme repository of all worldly knowledge to hack who knows nothing about Me and the Stuff I Am Going Through. Motherhood, I realize, is an inevitable fall from grace.

And yet, watching my mother work her culinary magic that Sunday, I also realized that evolution does not preclude reverting to earlier ways of seeing and believing—at least for a while. Maybe magic exists outside the natural imperative to grow up and to mature. Maybe the fastidious mind can still open itself up a little—and be pleased, after all.

That Sunday morning, I saw my mother again through younger, easily pleased eyes. That Sunday morning, my mom could do no wrong. She did everything crispy, crunchy perfect. Just like she used to, when I believed more and doubted less, when my knowledge of her was still pure, untainted by my knowledge of anything else.

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PHILIPPINE DAILY INQUIRER
LETTERS

What a vote for Kapatiran means

BEFORE WE CAST OUR VOTES ON MAY 14, let us remind ourselves that the future will be different if we make the present different. Toward this end, we would do well to consider the following:

A vote for senatorial candidates Zosimo Paredes, Martin D. Bautista and Adrian O. Sison of Ang Kapatiran party and its local candidates signifies the beginning of change as well as renewal.

A vote for Ang Kapatiran candidates means putting God at the center of politics, to put moral sense and decency and honesty in politics.

A vote for Ang Kapatiran candidates means building a nation of character and promoting the politics of virtue and the politics of duty, transparency, accountability, good citizenship and providing basic political education.

A vote for Ang Kapatiran means promoting the culture of life and peace, and active nonviolence and progressive disarmament as a precondition to a consistent ethic of life.

A vote for Ang Kapatiran candidates means total rejection of dirty politics made up of pork barrel, money politics, guns and goons, hypocrisy, dishonesty, political patronage, political pay-off, electoral chicanery, immoral compromises and political family dynasties.

A vote for Ang Kapatiran candidates means a commitment to the principles and platform of Ang Kapatiran.

A vote for Ang Kapatiran candidates means giving highest priority to projects and programs for the underprivileged, the indigenous peoples, the elderly, the prisoners, the disabled, the veterans; and paying special attention to the marginalized.

A vote for Ang Kapatiran candidates means doing something for a clean, safe, healthy environment and taking care of all God's creation.

—NANDY PACHECO,
founder-secretary general,
Ang Kapatiran Party,
angkapatiranparty@yahoo.com

AFP should leave voters' education to NGOs

WE, THE SOROPTIMIST INTERNATIONAL OF San Juan (SISJ), are surprised that the Armed Forces of the Philippines should take it upon itself to spearhead a voters' education forum and awareness campaign in Metro Manila, as announced by Maj. Gen. Benjamin Dolorfino, chief of the NCR command. The AFP certainly has no business conducting such a campaign for reasons already explained in many newspaper columns and articles.

There are hundreds of non-partisan NGOs all over the country which can be tapped to conduct this campaign. The AFP can very well course its voters' education program through these groups in order to erase all suspicions of "electioneering."

The SISJ is a member of the Soroptimist International of the Philippines Region (SIPR), the world's largest service organization of women-executives and -professionals, whose "purpose is service, principally to its community, but also to society in general—locally, nationally and around the world." The SIPR has 80 clubs throughout the country and would just be too willing to conduct the campaign, constrained only by the lack of funds needed for such a project. The SISJ recently conducted its voters' education seminar at the Municipal High School for the women of its adopted barangay, Corazon de Jesus, with the help of the Institute of Political and Electoral Reforms and the Consortium for Electoral Reforms (IPER/CER).

The IPER/CER, which is headed by Ramon Casiple, has consistently been conducting voters' education seminars, workshops and fora and has produced a video presentation (DVD) titled "Boto Ko, Kinabukasan Ko." The presentation has four research-based modules and provides a brief historical background on the right of suffrage and the election process; the qualifications of candidates who can best serve the country; and the responsibilities and action points that voters need to exercise before, during and after the elections. This video can be reproduced for distribution throughout the country and shown in every barangay.

Perhaps the AFP can provide some funds which it has set aside for its campaign for the SISJ and IPER/CER initiative.

Although rather late at this stage of the election campaign period, this can still be made possible through the many NGOs, POs, PPCRV, SIPK, NFWC and many other non-partisan organizations which have been advocating responsible voting through the years—toward a truly clean, honest, orderly, peaceful and credible election.

—ELIZABETH LORENZANA DIAZ,
president,
Soroptimist International of San Juan

Party-list denies it's 'Palace-fielded'

A NEWS REPORT, "DISQUALIFICATION OF 34 party-list groups sought" by Lelia B. Salaverria and Christian V. Esguerra (INQUIRER, 4/20/07), insinuated that our party list is "Palace-fielded." We feel that portions of our written reaction to such an insinuation made elsewhere were given a negative color in that article. In fact, even the support we are getting from some church sectors was reported in a negative light, without an INQUIRER reporter talking to us first.

Let it be known that despite the news story stating that Kontra Daya is "convinced" ABA-AKO is "fronting for the Arroyo administration," former Vice President Teofisto Guingona (one of Kontra Daya's founders) has written us affirming his confidence in ABA-AKO and promising to help correct the misimpression.

We would like to reiterate our appeal to the INQUIRER to give us a chance to present our side before it publishes something like this.

—ANTONIO Q. MONTEMAYOR,
campaign manager,
ABA-AKO, 90 Balete Drive Ext.,
E Rodriguez Sr. Ave., Quezon City

Tulfo's rehashed exposé vs Lacson

ALLOW ME TO REACT TO THE COLUMN OF Ramon Tulfo: "People have forgotten allegations about Ping Lacson." (INQUIRER, 4/26/07)

Sen. Panfilo Lacson has a competent media bureau to respond to this. But as a regular INQUIRER reader and voter, I think Tulfo is only using his column to revive and keep alive his personal animosity against his nemesis, Lacson. The alleged issues that he again brought up in his column against Lacson barely three weeks before the elections were never proven and therefore dismissed by the courts. The timing of his rehashed exposé is simply suspect, aimed to dampen Lacson's high popularity rating and reduce the winning votes that the senator will get this election.

The issues were deemed hearsay and mere allegations. There was no guilty verdict issued by any court against Lacson. On the other hand, the issues or cases filed against Tulfo by people, including the First Gentleman, for offenses such as alleged extortion and libelous statements, are still pending in courts to this day.

To answer the question posed by Tulfo to his readers: "Would you still reelect this man to the Senate after what I have told you about him?" Yes, I will vote for Lacson because I do not believe what Tulfo has said about this "man." But I have yet to read in the papers what the courts will say of the cases against Tulfo before I believe in him.

—ED MONTENEJO,
Las Piñas City

Global health above politics of exclusion

EVERY YEAR SINCE 1997, TAIWAN HAS applied to re-enter the World Health Organization, in the firm belief that its people deserve to be part of the global health network. But mainland China has blocked our entry every time because of its outmoded "one-China" principle.

This year, we renew once again our bid to enter the WHO. While we will continue to seek observer status in the World Health Assembly (the decision-making body of the WHO) and ask for "meaningful" participation in WHO technical conferences, we will also apply for full WHO membership under the name "Taiwan" instead of the "Republic of China." This three-pronged strategy, we believe, will give us a better chance to enlist international support for our campaign to enter the world health regulatory body.

The WHO Constitution clearly stipulates that "the enjoyment of the highest attainable standard of health is one of the fundamental rights of every human being." That's why it has granted membership or observer status to even non-state entities (e.g., International Committee of the Red Cross). But Taiwan, a democratic nation with 23 million people and home to the 17th largest economy in the world, continues to be excluded from the WHO because of the politics of exclusion practiced by mainland China. Doesn't this clearly contradict the founding principles of the WHO?

Taiwan is a responsible member of the global village, and its people are ready and willing to share our health resources with the international community. Our health system has reached world-class standards. We are considered the second healthiest nation in the world. In the past decade, we have provided over 90 countries with more than $450 million in medical aid and humanitarian relief. Taiwan's medical teams have gone overseas to work with local health personnel to provide efficient health care and protect the basic health rights of local people in times of disaster and medical emergency. We responded to an avian flu outbreak in Burkina Faso. All this demonstrates our resolve to support the global effort to accomplish the goals of the United Nations and the WHO in assisting the disadvantaged and the underprivileged.

Health is an issue of global importance. It has become increasingly clear that infectious diseases, such as avian flu, respect neither politics nor national borders. To build a secure global health community, all countries and areas must be integrated into the global health system. We must discard political prejudices and engage instead in dynamic professional health exchanges and cooperation.

We, therefore, ask the participants of the 2007 World Health Assembly, which convenes in May this year, to consider the interests of the world at large and to put an end to Taiwan's prolonged exclusion from the global disease prevention and control network.

—WELLINGTON WEI,
director, Press Division,
Taipei Economic and Cultural Office,
6891 Ayala Avenue, Makati City

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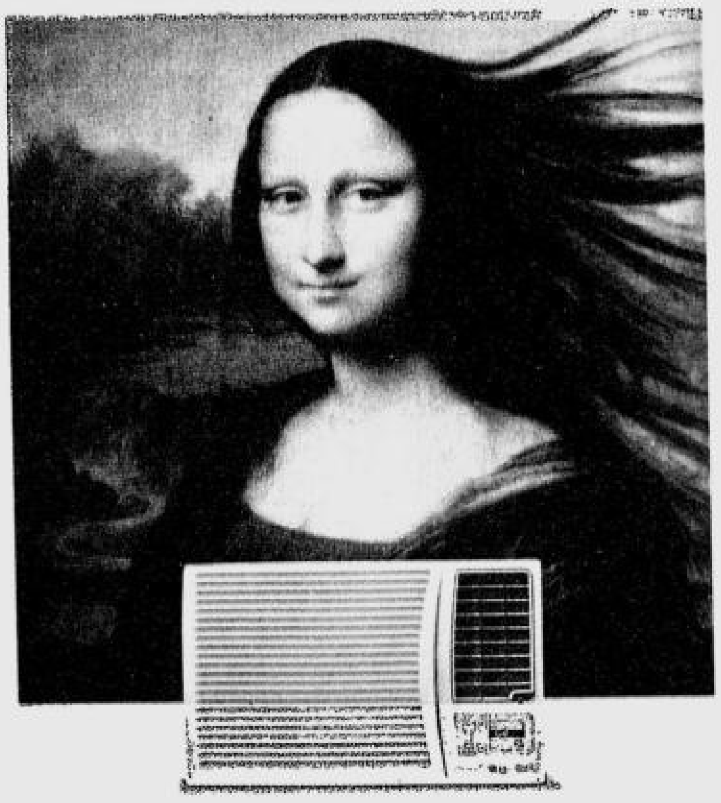

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Indonesian terror suspect eludes arrest; 4 kids found

From page A1

ta Mallod were also taken into custody. The soldiers said they also confiscated an M-16 assault rifle.

An Indonesian national who is claimed to be a senior member of the regional Jemaah Islamiyah militant network, Dulmatin is wanted by the United States, which has posted a reward of $10 million for his capture.

He is a key suspect in the 2002 Bali resort bombings, which killed more than 200 people, mostly tourists, and is believed to be hiding in Abu Sayyaf lairs in the Southern Philippines.

A US government website describes Dulmatin as an electronics specialist who trained in camps of the al-Qaida terror network in Afghanistan.

A lookalike

Commodore Emilio Marayag, commander of the Naval Forces South, said military agents started trailing a man who looked like Dulmatin in Sulu a month ago.

"They saw this man, who was a Dulmatin lookalike, so they followed him until they reached Tawi-Tawi," Marayag said.

He said the man went straight to the house of the Mallod sisters in Barangay Bakong in Simunul Island, and government agents put the house under surveillance.

Soon after, unidentified people brought the four children to the house and the man who looked like Dulmatin began paying them a visit.

All surnamed Pitono

Yesterday, soldiers finally struck—but the Dulmatin lookalike was nowhere there.

Marayag said the children were all surnamed Pitono, based on the statements of the Mallod sisters. Dulmatin's real name is Joko Pitono, the military said.

Marayag said the authorities had contacted Dulmatin's wife, Istiada Oemar Sovie, by phone and she immediately recognized the names of the children.

He said that Sovie, who had been deported to Indonesia after she and her two other children were captured in Patikul, Sulu, in October last year, confirmed the four children taken into custody yesterday were hers.

The four children will be turned over to the Bureau of Immigration (BI) in Metro Manila so they could be deported to Indonesia, Marayag said.

Military warned

Bai Racma Imam, social welfare secretary for the Autonomous Region in Muslim Mindanao, said the military should follow the protocol in handling children, who should be turned over to social welfare officials first.

Imam warned the military against subjecting the children to interrogation and "flaunting them before the media."

Military officials said a combined force of the Marines, Navy and police took part in the raid.

Defense Secretary Hermogenes Ebdane Jr. said he had not yet seen the report on the Tawi-Tawi raid but that this was a "good development" in terms of the intelligence gathering capabilities of authorities.

"At least, if the family is there then the man is somewhere around," Ebdane told reporters in Manila.

Follow-up operations

Marine spokesperson Lt. Col. Ariel Caculitan would not comment on whether Dulmatin and his group were in Tawi-Tawi "in view of the follow-up operations."

Caculitan told reporters that the raid was conducted at around 5:30 a.m. by combined elements of the 2nd Marine Battalion, Naval Task Force 64, the Philippine National Police and intelligence operatives in the area.

"The children are currently under the care of the military in the area and they will be brought to Zamboanga City so that they will be given due care and attention by the Department of Social Welfare and Development, considering they are minors," he said.

"The children will not be treated as terrorists," he said.

Caculitan said that for now the military still had no report on who owned the house where the children were found.

Local informants

He said that it was barangay officials who helped in locating the children.

LITTLE INNOCENTS: The Dulmatin kids arrive at the Air Force base in Zamboanga City. The military found the children in Tawi-Tawi with a caretaker. REUTERS

"When local people in communities would cooperate, it would be easy for us to get the information we need," Caculitan said.

Caculitan also said the recovery of Dulmatin's children by the military would be "a blow to his morale."

"Knowing that his children had been found, then this would give him a feeling of insecurity (and) he can also be located easily," he said.

Asked whether the military was close to getting Dulmatin, Caculitan said: "We'll see in the next few days how this would develop."

'We'll get them'

Ebdane said that the military and defense establishments were "optimistic that soon we can get them."

He was referring both to Dulmatin and to his JI associate, Umar Patek, who had earlier been reported by the military to be still in Sulu.

More than 8,000 troops, trained and advised by US forces, have been involved in a massive manhunt launched last year to track down wanted Muslim militants in Mindanao and nearby islands.

The Abu Sayyaf group has been blamed for a series of bomb attacks in the Philippines in recent years, as well as for high-profile kidnappings of foreigners and missionaries.

Since the military operation on Jolo began late last year, some of the Abu Sayyaf's top leaders, including its emir Khadaffy Janjalani, have been killed.

Pan-Islamic state

The Abu Sayyaf's remaining members, said to number around 400, have splintered into smaller units trying to evade government forces.

In addition to the Bali bombings, the Jemaah Islamiyah has been blamed for the 2003 Marriott Hotel and 2004 Australian Embassy attacks in the Indonesian capital Jakarta.

The United States says the JI aims to establish a pan-Islamic state in Southeast Asia through violent "holy war." *With reports from Christine O. Avendaño, AP and AFP*

Sandigan lets ...

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Cojuangco was not allowed to sell them while their ownership has not been settled.

In March 2006, Cojuangco petitioned the Sandiganbayan to be allowed to sell 73.3 million shares, or 13.3 percent, of the disputed stock to pay off loans that he said were incurred by 13 of the 44 corporations as a result of the Presidential Commission on Good Government's sequestration of the shares in 1986 and 1987.

Justifiable grounds

In granting Cojuangco's petition, the court said there "appears to be justifiable grounds" to allow the sale of the shares, saying it was not convinced by the government's claim that "the Republic would be left with an empty bag" if the sale was allowed.

It said it was allowing the sale to "alleviate" the predicament of the Cojuangco corporations "beleaguered with paying exorbitant interests on the loans and to avert the eventual foreclosure of the pledges."

The SMC shares were pledged to secure the loans from the UCPB (P5.3 billion) and the BOC (P2.6 billion).

But the court allowed Cojuangco to sell only 78 percent of the 73.3 million SMC shares he wanted to dispose of.

At yesterday's closing price of P81, the shares are worth about P5.94 billion.

The anti-graft court also clarified that the ruling was not tantamount to upholding Cojuangco's claim over the disputed assets, which represent 2.29 percent of SMC and which the government claims to be ill-gotten.

The court also said that if the government wins its case, Cojuangco would be held liable to their "transferees-buyers, especially if they are buyers in good faith and for value."

It also ordered Cojuangco and his companies to inform the court of their outstanding balance of the loan within 15 days from receipt of the resolution and identify the buyers within 15 days before the actual sale of the shares.

The court also specified that the proceeds of the sale must be solely for the payment of the loans owed.

PCGG opposition

In opposing Cojuangco's petition, the PCGG said that allowing the sale of the SMC shares "would cause substantial injury to the Republic" in the event that the government prevails in the ownership dispute.

"Any disposition of the subject shares would render meaningless a final determination that the Republic owns them," it argued.

The PCGG also reminded the court that by law, all recovered ill-gotten wealth from the Marcos family and associates—including proceeds from their sale—must go to fund the agrarian reform program.

Commenting on yesterday's ruling, PCGG Commissioner Narciso Nario said the Sandiganbayan merely authorized Cojuangco to sell approximately P6 billion worth of the company's stock, but made no judgment on its ownership.

COJUANGCO

"That is an authority to sell the shares," he said in a phone interview.

He pointed out that the UCPB, where the proceeds of the sale would be transferred, was also a sequestered firm.

"All that happened is that the asset moved from one sequestered firm to the other," he explained.

Nario said the question of ownership over the sequestered SMC stake remains unresolved.

"The main issue is still with the court," he said.

No plans to sell

Cojuangco yesterday said he has yet to read a copy of the resolution.

But he expressed frustration over the still unresolved case on the disputed ownership of his 20 percent block, now reduced to 19 percent after a stock rights offer diluted the stake.

He said that he had no plans to sell his entire stake should the court issue a similar decision over the shares.

"Why, that would mean I don't have confidence in the company. I have been here for 21 years, I will stick it out with the company even if there are claims that it's not mine," he said in Filipino.

His lawyer, Estelito Mendoza, said the Sandiganbayan ruling was a very welcome development which could pave the way for the sale of more than P4 billion worth of Class B shares owned by Cojuangco via the stock market very soon.

Class B shares are those owned by both Filipino and foreign investors.

"We are very glad and happy although it took a long time, more than a year ... we will pursue the sale, but I hope it does not affect the market too much," Mendoza said in a phone interview.

He said that because of the PCGG's sequestration of the shares, Cojuangco incurred the debts with the UCPB and the BOC whose interest payments swelled to P1.177 billion a year, or P3.2 million a day.

"It is short of what we need [to fully settle the debt] but it would be a lot of help," Mendoza said.

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Poll exec arrested after taking bribe

Comelec won't move yet, says probe to come first

By Jhunnex Napallacan and Alex Pal, *Inquirer Visayas* **and Nikko Dizon,** *in Manila*

CEBU CITY—THE NATIONAL BUREAU OF INvestigation (NBI) arrested the Negros Oriental election supervisor inside his office yesterday for extorting P300,000 from a congressional candidate.

A team of 17 NBI agents from the NBI regional office, headed by NBI regional director Medardo de Lemos, arrested Negros Oriental election supervisor Manuel Advincula inside his office during an entrapment operation at 7:15 a.m. yesterday.

De Lemos said the NBI conducted the entrapment operation after receiving a complaint from 3rd district congressional aspirant Edgar Teves, of the United Opposition.

Teves said Advincula approached him and offered assistance in the settlement of the disqualification case filed against Teves, De Lemos said.

However, Advincula reportedly asked for P300,000 from Teves in exchange for his assistance.

Teves told the NBI he was able to give P100,000 in the first week of April. Advincula sent a text message to Teves asking for the remaining amount of his "retainer's fee," De Lemos said.

He added that Teves negotiated with Advincula so he would give only P50,000 because he could no longer afford to pay the P200,000 balance and for the payoff to be made inside his office Friday morning.

De Lemos said an NBI agent, who acted as his secretary, accompanied Teves. Teves then gave the bag containing the money to Advincula.

De Lemos said the agent quoted Advincula as saying in Cebuano "Is this it," while the election official opened the bag.

De Lemos said Advincula then put the bag on a table after confirming that the money was inside it.

It was then that the other NBI agents, including De Lemos, arrested the election official.

The NBI agents brought Advincula to the NBI office in Dumaguete City, a few blocks from the provincial Commission on Elections (Comelec) office.

De Lemos said they have a strong case against Advincula because they were able to get text messages from Advincula sent to Teves demanding the "retainer's fee."

Regional election director Ray Rene Buac expressed shock when station dyLA informed him about Advincula's arrest yesterday morning.

Buac appealed to the people not to judge the whole Comelec based on the case as it only involved one election official. However, he admitted that this could stain the entire Comelec.

Dominador Cimafranca, provincial NBI head in Negros Oriental, said charges are being filed against Advincula.

De Lemos said the NBI is filing charges of direct bribery and violation of the Anti-Graft and Corrupt Practices Act, the Code of Conduct and Ethical Standards for Public Officials and Employees.

Advincula has denied the charge and said he would file charges of harassment and corrupting a government official against Teves.

His uncle, Rep. Herminio Teves, filed a disqualification case against Teves.

Edgar Teves is running against his nephew, Pryde Henry Teves (Lakas-CMD), who is Representative Teves' candidate.

But the Comelec said it would investigate the case.

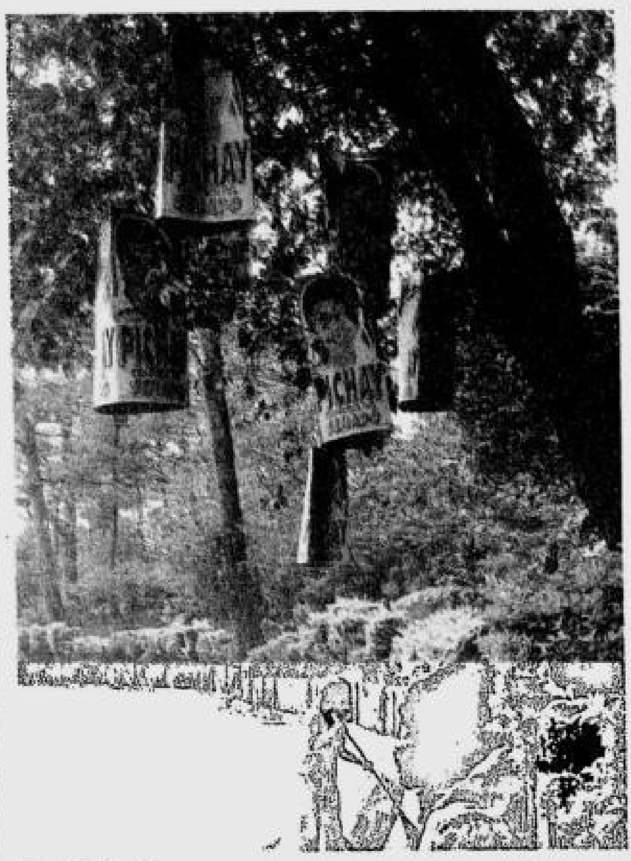
"If the evidence of guilt is very strong, he should be relieved and another honest and competent official should replace him," Comelec commissioner Resurreccion Borra said.

But if Advincula was proven to be a victim of a set-up, Borra said the Comelec would not hesitate to help him.

"I am still investigating this with our lawyer there because why is it they met in the office of the provincial supervisor early this morning at 6 o'clock? And a woman brought along a knapsack with money inside and thereafter, the NBI (National Bureau of Investigation) jumped (on) the provincial supervisor," Borra, the commissioner in charge of the province, said.

Borra said the Comelec has not been remiss in conducting values training for its personnel.

"We have waged a cascading training on values," Borra said.



HANGING VINCENT CABREZA/INQUIRER NORTHERN LUZON
Posters of senatorial candidate Prospero Pichay, whose campaign motto is to plant him in the Senate, hang from trees along Dominican Road in Baguio City, apparently an innovative way to campaign but not for environmentalists.

Mayors say TU sweep only through fraud

COTABATO CITY—LOCAL EXECUTIVES of Maguindanao, which is considered GMA country, said a 12-0 win for Team Unity is simply not possible.

The vice president of the League of Municipalities in the Philippines-Mindanao said a 12-0 win for the administration would only be possible if the results of the balloting were manipulated.

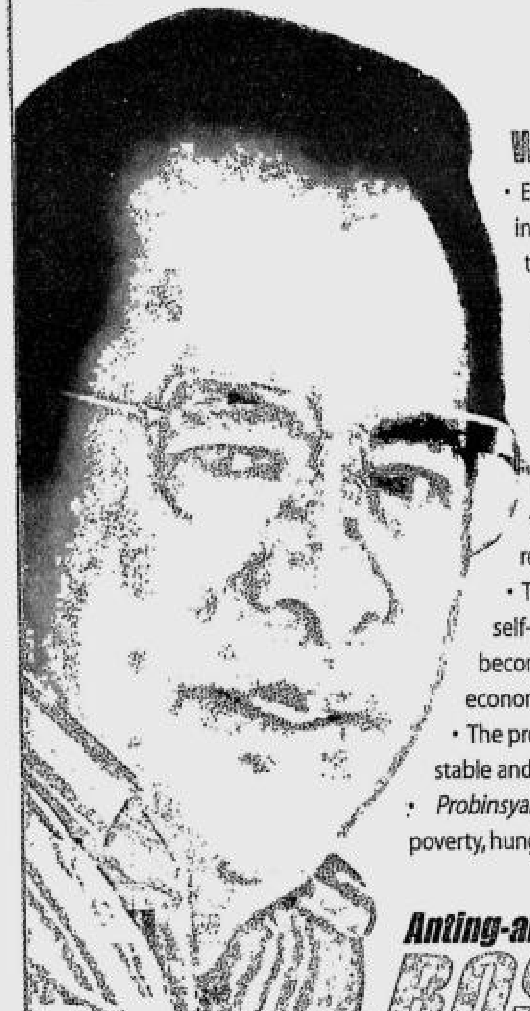
All 27 mayors of Maguindanao told Gov. Datu Andal Ampatuan Sr. during a meeting on Wednesday that perceptions about a landslide victory for administration-backed senatorial candidates in Maguindanao have no basis.

Guindolongan town mayor Midpantao Midtimbang said a 12-0 win is unrealistic.

Mayor Hadji Samer Uy of Datu Piang town, where the late actor Fernando Poe Jr. got zero vote in the 2004 presidential elections, also did not promise anything.

Balindong, Lanao del Sur Mayor Benjie Bagul, LMP-Mindanao vice president, said there was no assurance that all TU candidates would win in his province.

"We can't do it unless we manipulate (the results)," he said. *Nash B. Maulana and Charlie C. Señase, Inquirer Mindanao*



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- The provinces should become self-sufficient and competitive, thereby becoming engines propelling our nation's economic growth.
- The provinces should be made politically stable and economically healthy.
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KABATAAN Z KALIKASAN Z KAUNLARAN

What they say about Miguel Zubiri

Three Young Men – *"The big difference between the likes of... (three young senatoriables) ...on the one hand, and Zubiri, on the other, is that Zubiri immersed himself in public service to feed his ambition, whereas the former just focused on their ambition."*

-Domini M. Torevillas, The Philippine Star, 24 March 2007

Unlike Rabble-Rousers, Zubiri Has Solid Bill – *"The two (senatoriables) were busy getting media mileage for their attacks against administration, by contrast, Migz Zubiri has been busy putting together his landmark Biofuels Act that was signed into law."*

- Belinda Olivares-Cunanan, Philippine Daily Inquirer, 27 March

House Records Show Zubiri Most Prolific Lawmaker – *"Juan Miguel Zubiri was the most prolific among the five congressmen running for the Senate in the May 14 elections"*

- Delon Porcalla, The Philippine Star, 15 February 2007

Kinilala bilang PINAKAMASIPAG na MAMBABATAS ng ika-13 KONGRESO

Ilan sa mga Naipasang Panukalang Batas:

- **R.A. 9367 Biofuels Act of 2006**
- **R.A. 9275 Clean Water Act**
- R.A. 9165 Comprehensive Dangerous Drugs Act of 2002
- **R.A. 9161 Rent Control Act**
- R.A. 9163 Optional ROTC Act
- R.A. 9147 Wildlife Conservation
- R.A. 9064 Athletes Compensation
- R.A. 9003 Solid Waste Management Act
- R.A. 9166 AFP Rate Base Pay Increase Act
- **HB00978 Barangay Workers Benefits Bill**
- **HB01340 Increase in Pension of all Retired Government Employees Bill**
- **HB01008 Workers Rights Bill**
- **HB00994 LGU Empowerment Bill**
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PARA SENADOR

Raid yields ballots, poll ink

SAN PEDRO, LAGUNA—THREE SUPPORTERS of a mayoral candidate here yielded ballots, indelible ink and unlicensed guns in a raid that some candidates said gave a peek at how fraud had been instituted in the Commission on Elections and was likely to be used again on May 14.

Chief Supt. Nicasio Radovan Jr., Calabarzon police director, said police have asked the Comelec to inspect the bottles of indelible ink and 47 official ballots they seized from the house of one of the suspects.

"We still have to ascertain if the (election materials) are really genuine and how these people were able to get hold of it," Radovan told reporters at his office.

He said the police operation was part of a campaign against illegal guns dubbed "Oplan Paglalansag."

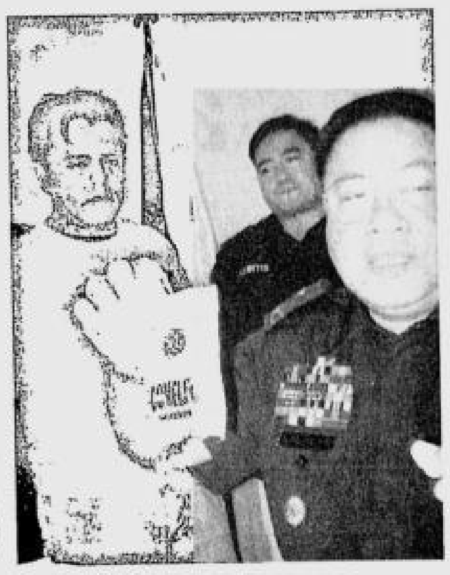
He said the Regional Special Operations Group (RSOG) first swooped down on the house of Ronaldo Berroya in Barangay Cuyab at around 5:30 a.m. and seized a .38-cal. revolver from him.

RSOG operatives also searched the residence of Alejandro Lorenzo, a barangay councilor, in the same village and found a .32-cal. revolver in his possession.

Berroya and Lorenzo admitted they owned the guns.

The policemen then raided the house of one Julian Olivares in Barangay San Roque.

Olivares, manager of a small town lottery office in here, is a known supporter of mayoral candidate Calixto Cataquiz Jr. who is trying to reclaim the seat he held for nine years.


CHIEF Supt. Nicasio Radovan Jr., Calabarzon police director, shows the bottles of indelible ink seized from supporters of a San Pedro, Laguna candidate. MARLON RAMOS/INQUIRER SOUTHERN LUZON

The raids, Radovan said, were covered by six search warrants issued by Imus, Cavite regional trial court Judge Cesar Mangrobang.

Supt. Roger James Brillantes, RSOG chief, said it was in Olivares' house where they confiscated the official ballots and bottles of indelible ink.

Brillantes said they arrested Rolando Cuevas, 39, after he tried to conceal the bottles of ink when the police frisked him.

Cuevas is the son-in-law of Olivares, who was not around during the raid.

"While my men were searching the house, Cuevas received a call from Olivares who instructed him to quickly get and hide the bottles of ink," Brillantes said.

Cuevas admitted that he was holding the bottles of indelible ink when police accosted him.

He, however, said he was not aware that the plastic bottles contained ink for use in the elections.

"I thought the bottles contained medicines for my diabetes," he told the INQUIRER.

The bottles were placed in a sealed plastic with a "Comelec" marking on it.

The ballots bore one serial number.

The three said they were supporters of Cataquiz.

Police also seized materials they said were apparently to be used in a smear campaign against Cataquiz's rival, Rep. Uliran Joaquin, a former Laguna Lake Development Authority official who was relieved on graft charges.

Cataquiz accused policemen of planting evidence against him.

"I'm sure my constituents are discerning enough to see the truth from lies," he said in a mobile phone interview.

But Brillantes said police are not taking sides in the political race. *Marlon Ramos, Inquirer Southern Luzon*

Impeachment seen vs poll execs over JDV vote cards

DAGUPAN CITY—MAYOR BENjamin Lim on Friday threatened to file an impeachment case against Commission on Elections commissioners who signed a resolution that declared legal the distribution of accident insurance cards by Speaker Jose de Venecia Jr.

"All commissioners knew that there was a pending disqualification case my supporters filed against De Venecia at the Comelec provincial office here and yet they issued the resolution based on a one-sided legal opinion," Lim said.

"This is a violation of due process. This is a very, very good basis for impeachment," he added.

On Thursday, the Comelec en banc issued Resolution 7907 that adopted the opinion of the poll body's law department that there was nothing wrong with the distribution of the insurance cards, which bore the picture of De Venecia.

Comelec Chair Benjamin Abalos Sr. and Commissioners Resurreccion Borra, Florentino Tuason Jr., Romeo Brawner, Rene Sarmiento and Nicodemo Ferrer signed the resolution.

As a result, De Venecia's supporters here immediately interpreted the Comelec's move as tantamount to the dismissal of the disqualification case against De Venecia.

Francisco Baraan III, Lim's lawyer, said the resolution was a result of what he described a "one-sided" Comelec investigation on the distribution of the insurance cards, which was first reported by ABS-CBN.

A video footage, which was later given to the Comelec, showed De Venecia distributing the cards here.

In an earlier opinion, Alioden Dalaig, director of the Comelec legal department, said the distribution of the cards did not constitute vote-buying.

Baraan said one of the petitioners, Floro Servito, 67, received an insurance card, which was given to him in his village.

"What is surprising here is that, given his age, he can no longer be covered by insurance. He's overage. But he still received an insurance card because the Speaker does not choose who to give," he said.

He said De Venecia had shown interest in the case because "he is vulnerable."

"He was caught in the act here. The issue in the Comelec now is not whether he distributed it or not because he had admitted it," Baraan said. *Gabriel Cardinoza, Inquirer Northern Luzon*

ROUNDUP

Outages worry poll exec

ILOILO CITY—An election official in the city expressed concern over the impact of recurring power interruptions in the city on the May 14 elections. Power interruptions could be "an opportunity for fraud," warned Iloilo provincial election supervisor and concurrent Iloilo City election officer Elizabeth Doronila. Although the power companies have assured a stable power supply earlier, the city experienced again a four-hour blackout on Wednesday.

David Israel Sinay, Inquirer Visayas

Bet pays off NPA

LEGAZPI CITY—Police were validating reports on the alleged payoff made by a gubernatorial candidate to the New People's Army in the amount of P40 million to harass his rival candidates in Albay. Supt. Elieser Bron, public information officer of the Bicol Police Regional Command, told the INQUIRER that the reports they received were still raw and had no supporting evidence, making it difficult for them to pinpoint the candidate being alluded to. Reports earlier said that the gubernatorial candidate asked the NPA in Albay to deny his rivals access to the barangays in exchange for P40 million. The NPA, however, denied the report.

Bobby Q. Labalan, Inquirer Southern Luzon

Getulio Reyes; 87

GETULIO Tapalla Reyes of Lipa City died yesterday. He was 87. His remains lie at the Lipa City Cathedral. Burial will be tomorrow, Sunday, at the Lipa Catholic Cemetery.

Batas show of force

SUPPORTERS of the Bagong Alyansang Tagapagtaguyod ng Adhikaing Sambayanan (Batas) held a show of force in caravans organized by the party-list group's supporters in Visayas and Mindanao. The supporters, according to a Batas press statement, were buoyed by what the group's leaders said was the success of the 5,000-vehicle caravan on Edsa that culminated in a rally at the Quirino Grandstand at the Luneta, where a program was held. During the program, nominees of Batas—Bong Coo, lawyer Batas Mauricio, broadcasters Jay Sonza and Daniel Razon spoke of the party-list group's platform. The gathering at the Quirino was covered exclusively by UNTV Channel 37 and monitored by popular networks GMA-7, ABS-CBN, IBC-13 and CNN. Organizers of the caravan said they beat the world record held by New Zealand of 300 vehicles.

SPIRITUAL ADVICE CONTRIBUTED PHOTO
Senatorial candidate Loren Legarda of the Genuine Opposition listens intently to the words of Archbishop Edmundo Abaya as she takes time out to pray during a campaign sortie in Vigan, Ilocos Sur.

A Call for Credible Elections

On Monday, 14 May 2007, Filipino voters will cast their ballots to elect new leaders or to re-elect deserving incumbent ones. This election is important for our democratic society, just as every election in the past has been, as it is the exercise of the sovereign will of the governed, granting a mandate to their governors. But perhaps this election assumes even greater critical importance because of the perceived distrust with or indifference among our people towards this most valuable of our democratic processes.

We, representatives of the business sector, believe that a credible election is a fundamental and critical step toward ensuring that this frame of mind does not become prevalent enough to undermine our people's faith in democracy, and toward uniting the country so that development may proceed more rapidly. Our country's poverty may actually be reduced if the present growth momentum is sustained by an electoral process that Filipinos believe is fair and produces credible leaders behind whom the people can unite.

Toward this end, we call on the leaders of the contending political parties, their affiliated organizations, their followers and sympathizers throughout the country, and most especially the candidates themselves, to do everything in their power to ensure clean and credible elections. Even more than the results of the elections, it is their conduct and credibility that will determine if our country can finally achieve unity and move forward.

We call on the military establishment to observe the spirit and letter of the agreement the Department of Defense signed with the COMELEC in October 2006 that seeks to insulate the military from partisan politics, with the COMELEC agreeing to deputize the military units only in high-threat areas. We call on the COMELEC to conduct their constitutional duties and responsibilities in the highest levels of transparency, fairness, and good governance.

We call on all freedom-loving citizens to be vigilant in protecting your votes against possible fraud. Watch the counting and report anomalies to responsible authorities. You may act as private individuals, but you may be more effective by joining volunteer groups that have organized for this purpose, like the National Citizens Movement for Free Elections and the Parish Pastoral Council for Responsible Voting or similar organizations.

We pray that this election will be peaceful, clean, and above all, ***credible.***

Ramon R. Del Rosario Jr.
***Chairman,** Makati Business Club (MBC)*

Samie Lim
***President,** Philippine Chamber of Commerce and Industry (PCCI)*

Albert F. Del Rosario
***President,** Management Association of the Philippines (MAP)*

John K. Tan
***President,** Federation of Filipino Chinese Chambers of Commerce and Industry, Inc. (FFCCCII)*

Abelardo V. Cortez
***President,** Financial Executives Institute of the Philippines (FINEX)*

Sergio R. Ortiz-Luis Jr.
***President,** Employers Confederation of the Philippines (ECOP)*

Jesus L. Arranza
***President,** Federation of Philippine Industries, Inc. (FPI)*

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***President,** Philippines, Inc.*

Mars M. Chua
***President,** Philippine Retailers Association (PRA)*

Alegria S. Limjoco
***Chairman,** Philippine Franchise Association (PFA)*

Gordon Alan Joseph
***President,** Cebu Business Club (CBC)*

Sergio R. Ortiz-Luis Jr.
***President,** Philippine Export Development Council (PHILEXPORT)*

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'It's all over but the counting'

By Rolando O. Borrinaga and Cynthia B. Pease
Tacloban City

MALACAÑANG MAY HAVE paved the way for the conduct of peaceful elections in Leyte long before the first votes are cast.

Some candidates and their supporters feel they are already assured of victories on May 14. For them, it is all over but the voting and the counting of the ballots.

As early as February, lawyer Ferdinand Martin Romualdez, who is running for representative in the first district in a coalition with reelectionist Gov. Carlos Jericho Petilla, and former Rep. Alfred Romualdez Jr., who is seeking the Tacloban City mayoral seat, were said to have been assured by President Macapagal-Arroyo herself that they would win.

An INQUIRER source close to the Romualdezes, who does not want to be named, said the President called a meeting with the Petillas and the Romualdezes, the contesting political clans, in the evening of Feb. 10 in Malacañang. She was to convince them to agree to a sharing arrangement in which their representatives would run for positions they were expected to win.

"President GMA believes this is the only way for the administration to win in the May 14 polls [in Leyte]," the supporter added.

Governor Petilla is running under the Lakas-CMD party. His mother, incumbent Rep. "Matin" Petilla, serves as the party's provincial coordinator. She opted not to run for any post.

Martin Romualdez is Kampi coordinator for the province.

The source said the President was able to convince Congresswoman Petilla not to seek reelection in May and to give way for Martin to run for Congress in the first district. In turn, Jericho Petilla could seek reelection as governor without opposition from any Romualdez.

This was the agreement between the Romualdezes and the Petillas that night and until this time, the INQUIRER learned.

Congresswoman Petilla does not want to comment on the supposed sharing agreement. The INQUIRER tried to reach Martin Romualdez through his supporters but they refused to give his contact number.

Before the Feb. 10 meeting, Congresswoman Petilla was reportedly busy in her campaign and had asked friends and supporters to support her and her son's reelection to their respective positions.

The Romualdezes, on the other hand, were bent on pushing their bids for Congress and in the Tacloban mayoral race.

Sure winners?

The sharing arrangement relieved the Romualdezes, dismayed the Petillas, and alarmed many observers and critics who felt worried about the decisions made over and above the general electorate's will.

For Martin and Alfred Romualdez, they feel

'IT'S ALL OVER'/ A21

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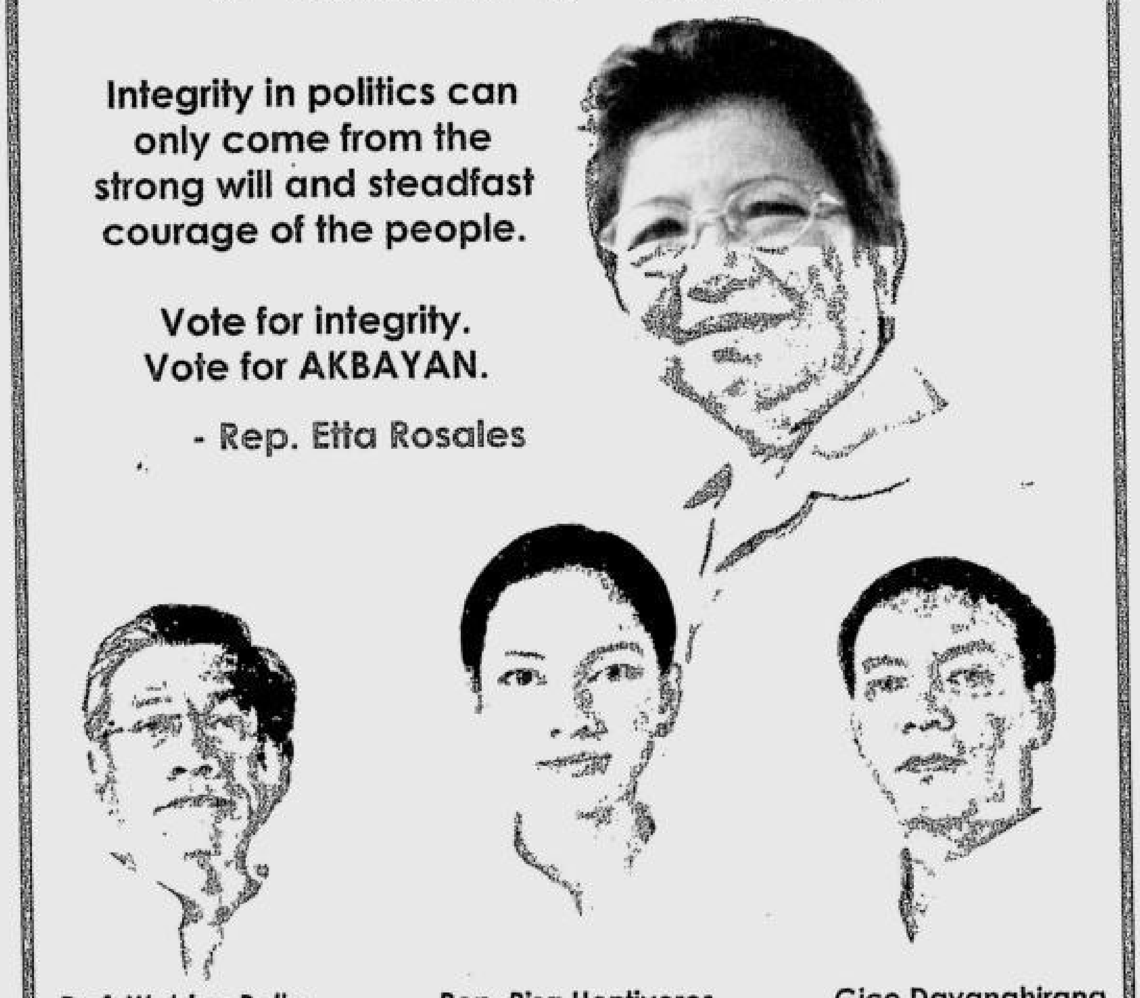

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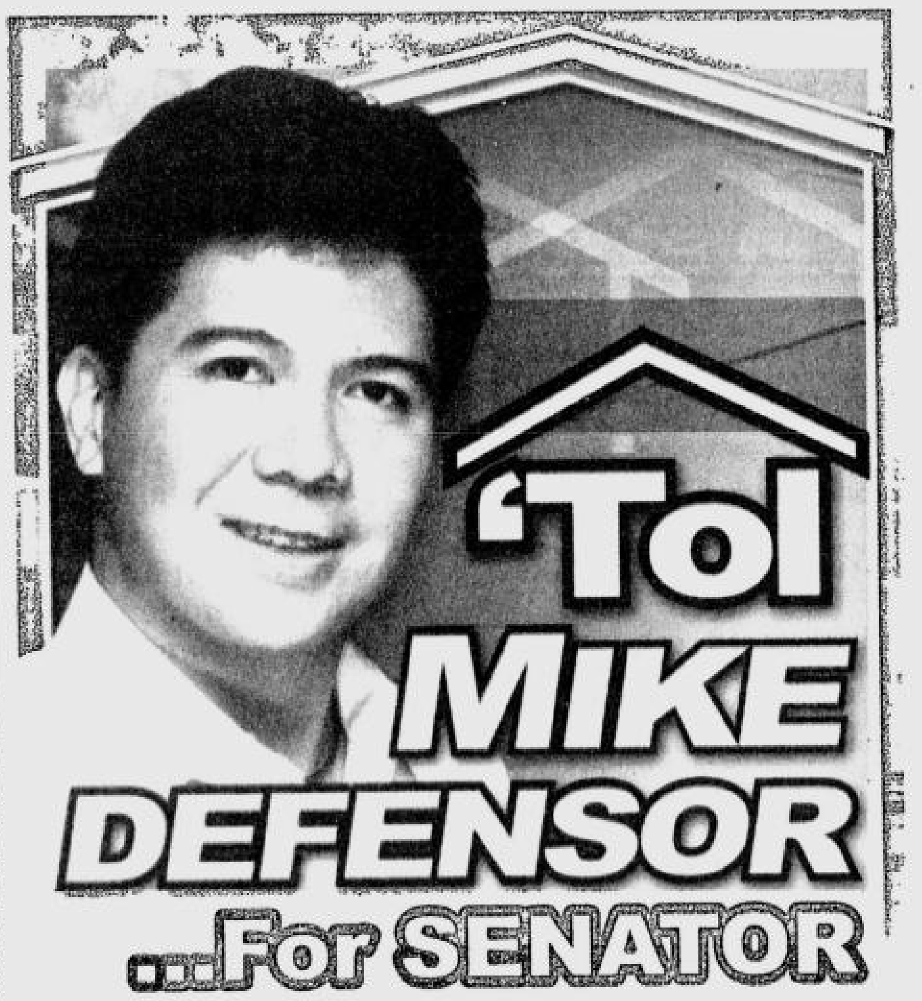

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- Most number of public lands proclaimed for housing sites for more than 682,023 families
- Lowered interest rates on housing loans by 2-3%
- Most number of beneficiaries under the Community Mortgage Program (CMP), the special lending facility for the informal sector
- Increased CMP loan ceiling by P20,000 – P30,000
- Cut red tape by reducing the signatories from 168 to 40 and fast-tracking the approval of housing permits and licenses from 90 days to 30-45 days
- Liberalized documentary requirements for housing loans
- Operationalized the Social Housing Finance Corporation for the informal sector and low-income families
- Dangal ng Pilipinas Awardee for Government and Public Service (October 2003)
- Most Outstanding Cabinet Secretary – Gawad Paglilingkod (December 2002)

As Secretary, Department of Environment and Natural Resources
- Highest confiscation of forest products for the first six months
- Rationalized logging operations
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- Highest apprehension of violators of the Philippine Clean Air Act
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- Monitored and facilitated the implementation of Pump Priming Projects
- Monitored and facilitated the implementation of Tindahan Natin Projects to provide affordable food products

As Congressman, Tenth and Eleventh Congress
- Authored two laws:
▶ Republic Act No. 7174, "An Act Upgrading the Quirino Memorial Medical Center and For Other Purposes"
▶ Republic Act No. 8976, "An Act Establishing the Philippine Food Fortification Program and for Other Purposes"
- Supported and co-authored laws such as the Clean Air Act, National Caves Act, Act for the Prevention and Control of HIV/AIDS; sponsored bills such as Dangerous Drugs Act, Nationwide Rabies Vaccination, among others.
- In his first term, authored 37 bills and 23 Resolutions
- In his second term, authored 24 bills and 25 Resolutions
- One of Asia's Political Leaders of the New Millennium – Asiaweek Magazine (November 5, 1999)
- Most Outstanding Congressman

As Councilor, Quezon City
- Manuel L. Quezon Bantayog Award as Most Outstanding Councilor (1994)
- Most Outstanding City Councilor – Media Award (1993)
- Authored the most number of ordinances and resolutions including the provision of emergency relief assistance for victims of natural and man-made calamities, creation of Anti-Smut Task Force, public posting of information on public infrastructure projects, etc.
- Proposed ordinances for Quezon City-owned public lands for housing sites for 15,000 families, establishment of Quezon City Polytechnic University, segregation of waste, rabies vaccination.

Print ad paid for by the Friends of Mike Defensor

POLICEMEN secure official ballots, election returns and bundles of indelible ink that arrived in Iloilo City and immediately stocked at the Iloilo Sports Complex building for temporary custody.

ARNOLD ALMACEN

‘It’s all over . . .

From page A20

relieved because they now have the assurance that, with the intervention of President Arroyo, a sure win is expected, the source said.

“The exclusion of [Congresswoman] Petilla in the congressional race in the first district of Leyte is considered an advantage for Martin, as he is now perceived as a sure winner,” another source, who requested anonymity, said.

Alfred was fielded in as Lakas-Kampi mayoral candidate for Tacloban. His opponent, Stephen Dan Palami of the Liberal Party, is running as an independent candidate.

“But even with Matin [Congresswoman Petilla] in the contest, Martin [Romualdez] will win as he is better than her. Besides, I believe that he can do more for the First District of Leyte,” a close Romualdez ally said.

But an insider of the Petilla camp disclosed that Matin [Petilla] was saddened by the move of Ms Arroyo, as she had really wanted to run for reelection.

“Of course, she was sad. But she can’t do anything as that was what the President wanted and expected her to do,” he said.

But the President’s move to choose Martin Romualdez over Matin Petilla was done in accordance with the expressed support of a greater number of mayors in the district who preferred to run under Kampi.

As early as December, seven of the eight mayors in the first district have pledged support for and loyalty to Martin Romualdez.

Last holdout

The last holdout, incumbent Mayor Roque Tiu of Tanauan town, who is seeking reelection, jumped to Martin’s bandwagon a week before the deadline of filing certificates of candidacy (CoCs) on March 29.

Whatever compelled the wannabes to switch party and loyalty affiliations to the Romualdezes is one reason that cannot be hidden. It is only because the clan has the money and the political machinery that can sustain them not only during the campaign but also on Election Day.

On the day Tiu was interviewed by the INQUIRER, he said, “I am the only one who stayed [in the Petilla camp]. I am running under Jericho ‘Icot’ Petilla. I will never switch parties. I am staying no matter what.”

But during the last day of filing of the CoCs, Tiu lined up with Kampi.

“But no one can be sure as to who will win the May 14 polls in the district,” said lawyer Fiel Clemencio of the Puwersa ng Masang Pilipino (PMP) party, who is Martin’s opponent in the race.

“No one can be sure if indeed Martin would win the elections until the results … are out,” he added.

Lakas CMD: Party with Platform & Vision

When asked which political party is capable of addressing the nation’s major concerns, Filipinos gave the highest rating to one political party: Lakas Christian-Muslim Democrats (Lakas CMD). An SWS survey showed Filipinos giving Lakas CMD the highest rating for addressing the problems of the economy, promoting peace and order, eradicating graft and corruption, fighting inflation in the cost of living, reconciling with Muslim rebels and helping resolve the Communist insurgency.

Filipinos see Lakas CMD as having an agenda and a platform of government: the party of noble leaders most trusted to carry out political, economic and electoral reforms.

Lakas CMD is moving on all fronts to expand and modernize the party. Since October last year, it has consolidated its national base with 3 million members, campaigners and watchers, who are holders of Lakas CMD membership cards that provide a host of benefits, just like those provided by the major political parties of Europe and the United States. The membership cards with P110,000 insurance and other benefits, valid from October 17, 2006 to June 30, 2008, have been distributed nationwide to Lakas CMD members.

The membership cards have been declared as *legal and valid and not vote buying* by the Commission on Elections in an en banc resolution issued this week, following the report of its Law Department.

Our Speaker, Jose de Venecia, thanks the many leaders and members of civil society who have joined Lakas CMD and are now card-carrying members.

Unmatched accomplishments

Parliamentarians, political and economic leaders and diplomats at home and abroad have said that few rivals can hold a candle to de Venecia’s unmatched accomplishments for being a statesman and a leader of political and economic integration in Asia; for his efforts in infrastructure, agriculture, fisheries, education and scholarships; for his pioneering work which helped create millions of jobs in the Middle East and North Africa; and for his dollar-remittance program, which has so far earned $150-billion for the Philippines.

His two major global initiatives have been endorsed by the UN General Assembly: the global debt-for-equity program to help some 100 of the world’s most heavily indebted nations to cut poverty in half by 2015 and achieve the other UN Millennium Development Goals; and the global interfaith, intercivilizational and intercultural dialogues to mediate religious violence and ethnic conflict in various trouble spots of the world.

Politics of achievement

His leadership is unmatched. That’s why in this election, in which he has campaigned on politics of achievement and performance, he has won multi-sectoral endorsements from *the Iglesia ni Cristo, the Catholic El Shaddai, the ministers and pastors of the Baptist, Methodist, Mormons and Evangelist churches, and all the universities and colleges of Pangasinan, including the Dagupan City Chinese Chamber of Commerce,* considering that his opponent is a Chinese-Filipino.

And in this election, the Lakas CMD and its Coalition allies—Nationalist People’s Coalition, Kampi, Liberal Party-Atienza Wing, LDP and PDSP—have campaigned for a sweeping victory of coalition candidates for congressmen, governors, vice-governors, board members, city mayors, municipal mayors, and councilors. The Coalition has helped in the strong surge across the nation of the Team Unity Senatorial Ticket.

Party President Jose de Venecia says: Go for Politics of Achievement & Politics of Performance. Go Lakas CMD. Go Team Unity!

By the Movement for the Re-Election of Speaker de Venecia

A PUBLIC APPEAL TO THE VOTING CONSTITUENTS OF PANGASINAN, DISTRICT IV

We, the undersigned, call upon the voters to **REJECT JOSE DE VENECIA'S (JdV) BID FOR REELECTION AS CONGRESSIONAL REPRESENTATIVE FOR DISTRICT IV IN PANGASINAN** for obvious and compelling reasons.

For one, JdV has maintained a track record of engaging in traditional and transactional politics—a remnant of the Marcos regime. JdV was the Chief Executioner of the gang in Congress that killed the two impeachment complaints against GMA, notwithstanding the President's admission of wrongdoing as evidenced by the Hello Garci tapes;

Secondly, JdV has been identified as an avid proponent of several anti-people and unpatriotic policy proposals and projects the most prominent of which was the Arroyo administration's attempt to railroad Charter Change: that would have further extended the terms of undeserving public officials. JdV also has been identified as one of the proponents of the controversial Northrail project, which has been viewed as grossly-disadvantageous to the Philippine government. This also involved the awarding of the contract to a Chinese company which had a more expensive proposal and a technologically-inferior train system.

Third, JdV remains identified with an illegitimate, morally-bankrupt, and dictatorial Presidential administration. At all the times when the entire nation stood up to condemn massive electoral fraud and violence, lying and cheating, graft and corruption, and human rights violations, de Venecia has chosen to stay silent and unheeding of the people's will.

These are just some of the glaring sins of commission and omission attributable to JdV.

We call upon all enlightened voters to stand for what is right and exhort their kababayans to unite and seek better political alternatives to the current crop of trapos: candidates who can better embody the virtues of principled fighting, mission orientedness, and selflessness.

Our choice will be one that will not only affect the entire province of Pangasinan, but the entire nation. Let us do our part in cleaning up the House of Representatives, by keeping none other than the Nation's Number One **TRAPO** out.

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DOH money used for pro-gov't rallies, says health exec

By Tonette Orejas
Inquirer Central Luzon

CITY OF SAN FERNANDO—THE amount of P19 million has been taken from the Safe Motherhood Program of the Department of Health to fund rallies to boost the homestretch campaign of the administration's senatorial candidates, a DOH official told the INQUIRER.

The source, who asked not to be named for security reasons, said the rallies were to be held simultaneously in 16 regions nationwide yesterday and today.

An assembly of 2,500 barangay health workers (BHWs) took place at 1-3:30 p.m. yesterday at the People's Gym at the Pampanga capitol compound. No candidate of the administration's Team Unity showed up, but the source said Health Undersecretary Ethelyn Nieto dropped a subtle instruction to the BHWs at the end of the program.

"We need a united Senate," the source quoted Nieto as saying.

The Safe Motherhood Program is devoted to extending health assistance to impoverished pregnant women.

According to the source, President Macapagal-Arroyo had told Health Secretary Francisco Duque III in a telephone call that the DOH seemed "not to be helping in the Team Unity campaign."

Duque was said to have instructed Nieto in turn to see what could be done.

This was how the plan was made to hold BHW assemblies with TU candidates invited to attend, the source said, adding that P1 million "on the average" would be spent for "food and shirts" at each assembly.

The source also said the P19 million was directly managed by the DOH national office.

'Another Joc-joc'

DUQUE

"This is another Joc-joc," the source said, referring to the alleged P800-million scam masterminded by then Agriculture Undersecretary Jocelyn "Joc-joc" Bolante and involving the use of fertilizer funds to help ensure Ms Arroyo's victory in the 2004 presidential election.

"In conscience I cannot take this. They want to earn 'pogi' (goodwill) points at our expense and at the expense of women who need help," the source said.

Duque, however, denied this.

"It is not true," he told the INQUIRER in Manila when reached for comment. "No, never, we will not allow that."

Duque said the DOH was actually organizing gatherings all over the country, but not for TU: "The assemblies are all geared toward the celebration of the Safe Motherhood Program of the DOH for the month of May."

He said the assembly at the People's Gym in Pampanga was "an information and education campaign for the components of the program."

"People will not see any political streamers or posters," Duque said, adding that the DOH was prepared to show a complete accounting of the expenses for the program.

He also said the program was important considering the Philippines' high maternal mortality rate—162 deaths per 100,000 live births, compared to only 42 per 100,000 live births in Thailand.

'Apolitical agency'

Nieto also denied the DOH source's claim.

"No, no, no," she said when asked by the INQUIRER in San Fernando if indeed she and Duque had appropriated P19 million from the DOH program to fund the final TU rallies.

"We are an apolitical agency. I am a government official and I am also apolitical," she said.

Nieto said similar assemblies were to be held simultaneously in the 16 regions starting yesterday to "observe safe motherhood week."

In Metro Manila, she said, the assembly gathered more than 4,000 BHWs yesterday morning.

Nieto claimed not to remember exactly how much the DOH was spending for these assemblies. She said some of the funds were drawn from the natural family planning program.

"We still have some money left, so we asked other BHWs to join the trainers," she said.

'Why so sudden?'

But the source said many DOH officials were surprised at the plan.

"Ayaw nila (They don't like it). They're asking: Why the suddenness [of these assemblies]?" the source said.

Health workers interviewed by the INQUIRER before the start of yesterday's assembly said they were invited only on Thursday. They traveled to San Fernando from remote villages in Pampanga.

Two other local health officials, who did not want to be identified, said the instructions to organize the assembly were given only on Tuesday.

"We're wondering why we are suddenly having this event when we had none before," an official said. *With a report from Edson C. Tandoc Jr. in Manila*

Only one Cayetano now; Joselito Pepito Cayetano disqualified

From page A1

dissemination of the resolution. The Comelec should find ways and means to disseminate it to the Board of Election Inspectors," De Lima said in a phone interview.

The lawyer said her advice to her client was for his camp to still "teach the people to write 'Alan Cayetano'" on their ballots to ensure that their votes would be credited to the GO candidate.

The Comelec en banc resolution was silent on whether all "Peter," "Peter Cayetano," and "Cayetano" votes would be credited to Alan Peter Cayetano.

"That was in our [petition] ... I wish that in their resolution, [the commissioners] made that clarification for the guidance of the Board of Election Inspectors in the appreciation of ballots," De Lima said.

'Jojo,' not "Peter'

Alan Peter Cayetano, representative of Taguig-Pateros, had been seeking his namesake's disqualification for being a nuisance candidate, and had told the Comelec in a petition that the latter was known as "Jojo," and not "Peter," in his community in Davao City.

He had claimed that Joselito Cayetano's candidacy was part of Malacañang's machinations to derail his own candidacy.

The congressman had earlier accused President Macapagal-Arroyo's husband and members of the First Family of owning secret accounts in a German bank.

The Comelec en banc also ruled with finality that Alan Peter Cayetano is a Filipino citizen.

The ruling was in response to two separate disqualification cases filed against him by former Pateros Mayor Jose Capco and broadcast journalist Percival Mabasa questioning his citizenship.

Noynoy's case

In another resolution issued Thursday night, the Comelec en banc disqualified independent senatorial candidate Theodore Aquino and ruled that all "Aquino" votes would be credited to GO candidate Benigno "Noynoy" Aquino III.

"All 'Aquino' votes will go to Noynoy," Comelec Chair Benjamin Abalos Sr. said in a press conference late Wednesday afternoon after an en banc meeting.

"As far as Theodore is concerned, his certificate of candidacy was not given due course by the poll body because he has not filed a certificate of renunciation of his American citizenship. He is not considered a candidate," Abalos said.

Earlier, Comelec Commissioner Florentino Tuason Jr. explained that Republic Act 9225 (or the Citizenship Retention and Re-acquisition Act of 2003) requires that a dual citizen should renounce his foreign citizenship.

This means that a candidate should pledge allegiance only to the Philippines if he wants to hold an elected position in the country, Tuason said.

Noynoy Aquino is the only son of former President Corazon Aquino.

Theodore Aquino, an uncle of Noynoy Aquino's, is a civil engineer based in San Francisco.

After a century, political clan still rules

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Ortega as civil governor.

This year, they are fielding 13 family members for various positions in and outside the province.

Leading the family's candidates are outgoing Gov. Victor Francisco Ortega, who is running for representative of the first district, and his younger brother, outgoing Rep. Manuel Ortega, who is running for governor.

Their younger brother, Pablo, is running for mayor of the capital, San Fernando City. He hopes to take the place of his sister-in-law, Mayor Mary Jane Ortega, Victor's wife, who is completing her three terms.

Mary Jane, who will not seek any elective position this year, said that preserving the family's good name was the force behind the Ortegas' desire to give public service.

"It's because the father (Francisco) and grandfather (Don Joaquin) left a good name. Therefore, the challenge to the succeeding generation is to keep that good name alive... They are afraid to be the first one to dirty or sully the name," she told the INQUIRER.

Pablo said: "We serve body and soul. That is our secret."

"If your father or grandfather left you a good name, that is an advantage. If not, they will not vote for you anymore; you will have a hard time convincing them if you are not like your father or grandfather."

• JOSONS OF NUEVA ECIJA

The Josons' dominance in Nueva Ecija politics started in 1960 when then Quezon Mayor Eduardo Joson was elected governor. Joson was mayor for 13 years before he joined the gubernatorial race.

He was reelected five times, completing a total of more than 27 years as governor of the province until his death in 1990.

Joson's political experience rubbed off on his five sons, who followed in their father's footsteps.

Murder charges

After the death of Eduardo Joson, his son Tomas III, ran for governor in 1992 and won.

Tomas was running for reelection in 1995 when he, together with brother Mariano Cristino, then mayor of Quezon town, was indicted for the death of gubernatorial candidate Honorato Perez, former Cabanatuan City mayor.

Tomas and Mariano Cristino, along with 12 other accused, were detained while their cases were being tried at the Pasig Regional Trial Court.

Tomas was replaced as candidate for governor by younger brother Eduardo Nonato, a former assemblyman and congressman of the first district of Nueva Ecija. Nonato won by a big margin against Perez's widow.

In the 1998 elections, Tomas, while still detained, filed his candidacy for governor. He won and was reelected two more times.

Cases dismissed

In 1999, the Pasig City judge dismissed the murder cases against the Joson brothers and 12 of their co-accused.

Five Josons are seeking elective posts in the province this year.

Tomas III is ending his term as governor on June 30 but he is running for mayor of Cabanatuan.

His brother, Mariano Cristino, the incumbent vice governor, is running for governor. Cristino's running mate is Board Member Edward Thomas Joson, son of Tomas III.

Eduardo Nonato is running in the first congressional district in lieu of Cristino's wife, Rep. Josefina Manuel-Joson, who is ending her third term.

They are running under the coalition of Balane and the administration party Kampi.

Another brother, Eduardo IV, a former vice governor, is running for representative of the third district of Nueva Ecija. He is running under the United Opposition banner.

• DYS OF ISABELA

The Dys' more than 30 years' hold on Isabela politics was broken by neophyte politician and former radio broadcaster Maria Gracia Cielo Padaca in 2004 when she trounced reelectionist Gov. Faustino Dy Jr.

There won't be a rematch between Padaca and Dy this year. Instead, Padaca, a polio victim, is facing another member of the clan, former Gov. Benjamin Dy, brother of Dy Jr.

Dy Jr. opted not to run against Padaca, citing health concerns.

But while the family suffered a blow in the gubernatorial race in 2004, other family members won various seats, a testimony to their influence among various sectors in Isabela.

The Dys—reelectionists Rep. Faustino Dy III, Cauayan City Mayor Caesar Dy and Alicia Mayor Napoleon Dy and Cauayan City Barangay League president Victor Dy—said they believe they owe their positions to the legacy left by their father, former Gov. Faustino Dy Sr.

"The legacy left by our father has been treasured by the people and we are paying this back with honest and effective public service," said Dy III.

Benjamin said the family respected the people's will when their brother, Faustino Jr., lost to Padaca in 2004.

• MARCOSES OF ILOCOS NORTE

The few remaining dynasties in Ilocos Norte are known families like the Marcoses and the Fariñases. Lesser known political clans hold various positions, from councilors and mayors.

Three-time Gov. Ferdinand "Bongbong" Marcos Jr. is the sole Marcos scion running this year after his sister, Rep. Imee Marcos, decided to leave politics, temporarily. Marcos Jr. is running unopposed for his sister's seat.

Three cousins of the governor have been occupying positions in the provincial board.

Former Gintong Alay Chair Michael Keon, son of late Ilocos Norte Gov. Elizabeth Keon, is running for the gubernatorial seat that Bongbong has occupied for nine years. Elizabeth was the younger sister of late dictator Ferdinand Marcos.

Other cousins Mariano Marcos II and Angelo Marcos-Barba are running for provincial board member on their second terms.

Michael Keon said being a Marcos cousin was a plus to his candidacy.

"I can move on my own. But, of course, when (Bongbong) moves with us, it gives me a boost. He's the son of the Apo (the late Marcos)," he said.

The Fariñas clan has slowly carved its name in politics from the time then Laoag Mayor Rodolfo Fariñas entered politics in the 1980s.

Fariñas became governor and congressman before he took a break from politics after his wife, former actress Maria Theresa Carlson, died six years ago.

Laoag City has become a stronghold of the Fariñases. After Fariñas served for nine years, his elder brother, Roger, took over and also served for three terms.

Reelectionist Mayor Michael Fariñas, nephew of Rodolfo and Roger, is running for a second term.

• Singsons of Ilocos Sur

Despite the decision of Gov. Luis "Chavit" Singson to leave the province by running for senator, the Singsons' rule in Ilocos Sur is likely to continue.

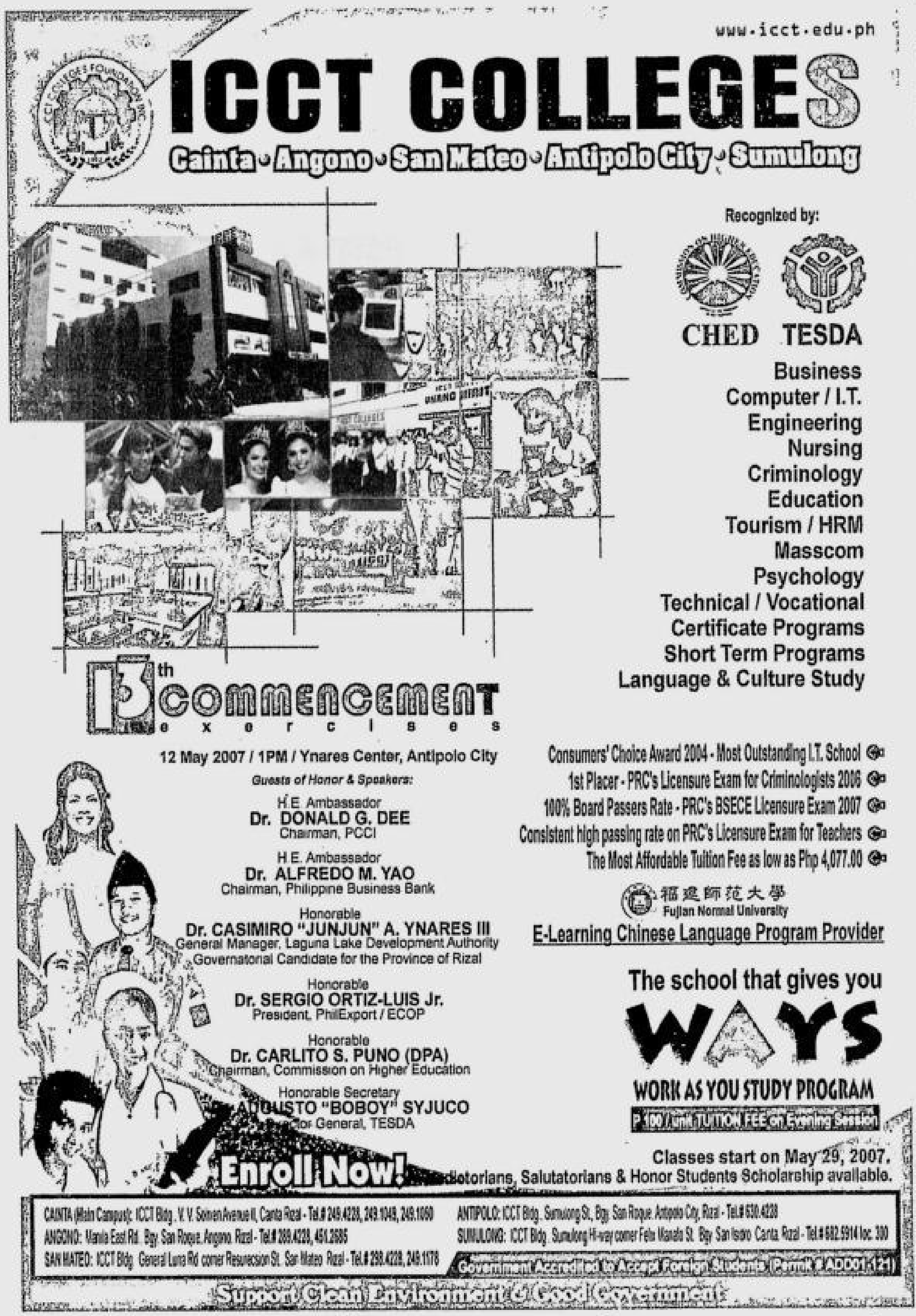
Singson's son, Board Member Ronald Singson, is said to be leading in his congressional fight against lawyer Bertrand Baterina.

Singson's brother, Board Member Jeremias Singson, is expected to get the vice governor post.

Singson's sister, Germilina Singson-Goulart, is running for mayor in Caoayan town while Chavit's niece, Eva Marie Singson-Medina, is running unopposed as mayor of Vigan.

Deputy Speaker Eric Singson, the political kingpin of the second district, is expected to beat Ernesto Antolin and Henry Capela.

Eric's son, Candon City Mayor Allen Singson, is expected to trounce unknown Wilfredo Virocel. *Reports from Yolanda Sotelo-Fuertes, Hanna Lacsamana, Villamor Visaya Jr. Cristina Arzadon and Leoncio Balbin Jr., Inquirer Northern Luzon, and Anselmo Roque, Inquirer Central Luzon*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ABC classes pick Escudero; D, E crowds go for Legarda

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SWS conducted from May 2 to 4, which showed which candidates had a statistical chance of making it to the winning circle.

According to the overall nationwide survey results, Legarda, Senate President Manuel Villar, Escudero, Sen. Francis Pangilinan, Sen. Panfilo Lacson, Tarlac Rep. Benigno Aquino III, Sen. Ralph Recto, Taguig-Pateros Rep. Alan Peter Cayetano, Bukidnon Rep. Juan Miguel Zubiri and independent candidate Gregorio Honasan were the 10 candidates that respondents said they would "surely vote" for on May 14.

The last two seats were being contested by Sen. Edgardo Angara, Sen. Joker Arroyo and ex-Sen. Vicente "Tito" Sotto III, candidates from the administration Team Unity.

The choices of the E classes in the education-and-class survey largely reflected the overall survey results, except that actor Cesar Montano and Recto are tied for 12th place.

College graduates chose Aquilino Pimentel III (tied in 10th to 11th with Recto) over Honasan, who was tied with Zubiri in the 9th and 10th places.

High school graduates chose Sotto (12th) instead of Angara, who was ranked 11th in the overall survey.

Among respondents in ABC classes, the "magic circle" also included Sonia Roco (11th) and Michael Defensor (12th), in place of Honasan and Angara.

Those who did not finish elementary school chose Montano (4th), Sotto and Rep. Prospero Pichay (tied between ranks 7th and 10th with Aquino and Recto), instead of Escudero, Honasan and Arroyo.

Escudero, who ranked 3rd in the overall survey results, only ranked 13th among those who did not finish elementary school. Honasan placed 14th, while Arroyo tied for 18th among non-elementary finishers.

'Fill-up rate'

College and high school graduates chose an average of 8.4 names for their ballots, while elementary school graduates chose an average of 6.7 names. Non-finishers of elementary school chose an average of 5.2 names.

By socioeconomic class, the average "fill-up rate" was 8.5 names among members of classes ABC, 7.6 names in class D and 6.5 names in class E.

The same SWS pre-election survey showed that respondents have studied and are already committed to their choices, are choosing on their own rather than according to partisan influences, and would bring a prepared list when they vote on Monday.

Majority of voter-respondents (57 percent) said they "definitely would not change their minds anymore" from the senatorial candidates they had chosen earlier.

This view was shared by 67 percent in Metro Manila, 63 percent in the rest of Luzon, and 49 percent in both Visayas and Mindanao.

Twenty-two percent said they could still easily change their minds, while 18 percent said they had "probably" decided their votes already.

Meanwhile, 17 percent in Metro Manila, 21 percent in Luzon outside Metro Manila, and 25 percent in both the Visayas and Mindanao said they were still "liable to change their mind."

The time spent studying the choices for senator was strongly related to vote commitment, the survey also found.

Of those who said they had begun studying their candidates at least one month ago, nearly seven in 10 (68 percent) said they would definitely not change their mind, while only 17 percent said they might still change it.

The survey also showed that more than one of every two Filipino voters (53 percent) had begun studying their choices at least a month ago.

One in five (20 percent) said they began studying the candidates "within the last three weeks," while roughly one of every four (24 percent) said they began "just now."

Among those who said they studied their choices "just now," only 44 percent were "fully committed" and 34 percent said they "might still change their mind."

The top 12 choices for senator of those who began their study at least a month ago were the same as the choices in the overall results, except that the list includes Trillanes in 12th place and put Angara in 14th.

Those who said they started thinking of their options "just now" had Sotto in 11th place and Cayetano in 13th place.

The top 12 choices for those who began thinking about it only in the last three weeks are the same as the choices in the overall national survey results.

No outside influence

Asked who or what had the biggest influence on their choice of candidates, over seven of every 10 voters (73 percent) said they made choices on their own "without outside influence."

Meanwhile, 21 percent cited "partisan sources" as the main influence on their votes, which included "GO candidates" (7 percent) and "TU candidates" (5 percent).

Citations of GO candidates were "relatively high" in Metro Manila (20 percent). Citations of TU candidates were relatively high in Mindanao (14 percent).

Nationwide, only 4 percent cited media and political ads, while only 1 percent cited religious endorsements.

Asked whether they would bring a personal list or a sample ballot on election day so they would remember their choices, around three of every five voters (62 percent) said they were "likely" or "very likely" to bring their own list or "*kodigo*."

This opinion was shared by majority of respondents across all areas (69 percent in Mindanao, 63 percent in the Visayas, 61 percent in Metro Manila and 58 percent in the rest of Luzon).

Thirty percent said it was "unlikely" or "very unlikely" that they would bring a list or a sample ballot on election day, while 8 percent said they "have not thought about it."

The survey used face-to-face interviews with 1,200 registered voters divided into random samples of 300 each in Metro Manila, the rest of Luzon, Visayas and Mindanao.

Of these respondents, 12 percent were college graduates, 42 percent were high school graduates "short of finishing college," 29 percent were elementary school graduates "short of finishing high school," and 16 percent were non-elementary school finishers.

Seven percent belonged to the middle-to-upper ABC classes, 66 percent from the D or the "mass" class, and 27 percent from the "very poor" E class.

The survey, the last of three pre-election surveys on senatorial preferences that the SWS conducted for the INQUIRER, had a margin of error of plus-or-minus 3 percentage points. *Kate Pedroso, Inquirer Research*

Cory, Erap give GO final boost

By Norman Bordadora

TWO TOP GENUINE OPPOSITION campaigners—the country's leading political endorsers, according to the Social Weather Stations—last night gave the anti-Arroyo candidates one last push as the election campaign headed to a close.

Former President Corazon Aquino and deposed President Joseph Estrada showed their support for the GO senatorial slate at the opposition "miting de avance."

Aquino lent her presence to the event while Estrada called on Filipinos to be vigilant against election fraud as opinion surveys showed GO candidates at the forefront of the senatorial races.

Actress Susan Roces, widow of 2004 opposition standard-bearer Fernando Poe Jr., earlier accompanied Aquino in a Mass but begged off from attending GO's rally at the Folk Arts Theater attended by 8,000 people.

Estrada was not allowed to leave his detention place in Tanay, Rizal, and made his pitch in a video-taped message.

"Let us guard our votes closely. Let us no longer allow the blatant cheating to happen. The country knows that (Fernando Poe Jr.) was cheated in the last elections," Estrada said.

"Let us be vigilant against efforts to subvert the people's will ... Let us fight the team of impunity that will try to win with the four G's—guns, goons, gold and Garci," he added.

Estrada was apparently referring to a supposed wiretapped conversation between former Election Commissioner Virgilio Garcillano and President Macapagal-Arroyo dealing with rigging the 2004 election—a charge Garcillano and Ms Arroyo denied.

Estrada asked the military and the Commission on Elections to avoid involvement in cheating.

"(Fraud) might become the spark of the people's wrath. The patience of the people is slowly wearing out," Estrada said.

Aquino quietly left after her son Tarlac Rep. Benigno Aquino III spoke at the rally.

ISANG BOTO MO PANALO NA!

Sa mga PAUTANG na PUHUNAN sa mga maliliit na negosyo.

Sa Dumadaming NAMUMUHUNAN at asenso sa TRABAHO.

Sa dekalidad na pangangalaga ng KALUSUGAN.

Sa tumataas na antas at kondisyon ng EDUKASYON.

Sa lumalawak na IMPRASTRAKTURA na nagpapabilis ng pag-unlad at serbisyo.

ISANG BOTO MO, ISUSUGAL MO PA BA?

SA PAGKAKAISA, TULOY-TULOY ANG KAUNLARAN.

ADVT

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- Awarded scholarship grants to 127 indigent, deserving students
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ADVT

STA. LUCIA'S Nelbert Omolon (left) disputes the rebound with Purefoods' Jondan Salvador in last night's game at Ynares Center in Antipolo City. INQUIRER PHOTO / AUGUST DELA CRUZ

Aces thwart Kings again

SLR breaks ice, nips Purefoods

By Musong R. Castillo

ANTIPOLO—A FIRST FOR THE second time.

Getting a triple double from Rosell Ellis and a hard-nosed stand from the rest, Alaska dealt Barangay Ginebra a first loss in seven games with a 97-91 decision last night in a PBA Fiesta Cup game at the Ynares Center here.

Ellis scattered 14 points, grabbed 14 rebounds and issued 11 assists in leading the Aces to a repeat win over the Gin Kings, whose first loss in the import-spiced tournament also came at the hands of Alaska, 100-98, on March 11.

"Gee, it's tough to play a team as hot as that because they are so confident," Alaska coach Tim Cone later said. "I thought we had them early, but then we had to bleed for everything. It was just a tough game."

The Aces won out in a see-saw game, breaking away for good inside the final two minutes after Willie Miller knocked in a cold-blooded triple that shattered an 89-all tie.

And from there, the Gin Kings couldn't respond. Rod Nealy and Antipolo native Sunday Salvacion carried the fight for the Kings and shared team honors with 25 points each.

But after Jec Chia made it 91-92 with a jumper that beat the shotclock from the right corner with 1:31 left, both Salvacion and Nealy went cold.

Miller went on to lead Alaska with 22 points and three others finished with at least 11 as the Aces regained a piece of second place with Air21 and idle defending champion Red Bull at 9-4.

Ginebra, whose last loss came in the early days of April against Talk 'N Text, remained in the solo lead despite the loss, just its third in 13 outings.

In the second game, Jamaal Williams scored eight of Sta. Lucia's final 12 points to lead the Realtors to a shaky 93-92 decision over Purefoods.

The Realtors snapped a five-game losing spell and claimed just their fourth win in 13 outings.

The Tender Juicy Giants are now just a win out of the cellar with their 4-10 card.

The scores:

STA. LUCIA 93—J. Williams 32, Omolon 26, K. Williams 18, Aquino 6, Miranda 4, Gonzales 3, Bughao 2, Catli 2, Isip 0, Mendoza 0.

PUREFOODS 92—Chandler 40, J. Yap 20, Evangelista 11, Simon 7, Castillo 5, Yee 4, R. Yap 2, Camaso 2, Salvador 1.

Quarters: 27-24, 51-52, 65-73, 93-92

Second Game

ALASKA 97—Miller 22, Ellis 14, Ferriols 13, Cariaso 13, Belasco 11, Laure 9, Thoss 7, Hugnatan 4, Singson 4, Bajar 0.

GINEBRA 91—Nealy 25, Salvacion 25, Tubid 11, Seigle 9, Macapagal 6, Chia 6, Mamaril 3, Santos 3, Echavez 1, Helper 0.

Quarters: 30-18, 49-47, 77-75, 97-91

GAME TODAY
(Cebu Coliseum)
6 p.m.—Red Bull vs. San Miguel Beer

GAMES TOMORROW
(Araneta Coliseum)
4:05 p.m.—Coca-Cola vs. Alaska
6:35 p.m.—Barangay Ginebra vs. Purefoods

Late Sports

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Fake car thefts giving QC cops headache

False report allegedly made to collect insurance, says police report

By Margaux C. Ortiz

INCIDENTS OF STAGED CAR thefts are the new bane of the Quezon City Police District.

QCPD Director Senior Supt. Magtanggol Gatdula reported to Mayor Feliciano Belmonte Jr. that his men arrested recently a driver for claiming armed men forcibly took his car on April 30.

Gatdula said Johny delos Santos, 40, of No. 10 Colt St., West Fairview, Quezon City, told investigators at the QCPD Station 6 that two armed men took a silver Nissan Sentra he was driving around 10:45 p.m. on Don Faustino St., Barangay Holy Spirit.

But during the initial investigation, police discovered several suspicious text messages in the driver's cellular phone from his employer who owned the car.

"When the suspect learned that the police had accessed his phone's inbox, he confessed that his boss Gerry Fevidal and his business partner Cenen Bansale, who have a rent-a-car business, instructed him to make a false report," Gatdula said.

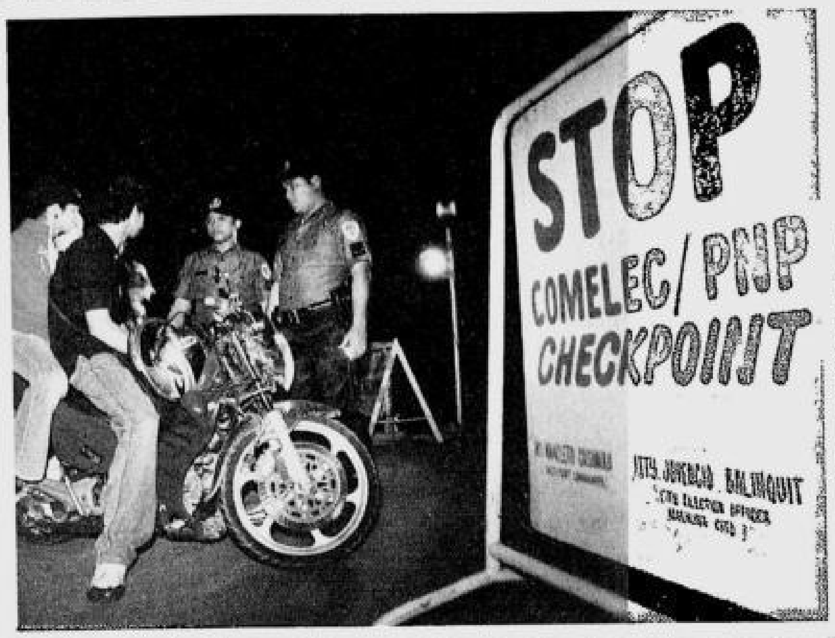
Delos Santos alleged that his employers had faked car theft incidents for insurance purposes after clients failed to return vehicles they had rented. He said a client failed to return the silver Nissan Sentra, which he then reported as stolen. A perjury case is now being readied against De los Santos, with Fevidal and Bansale as conspirators, Gatdula said.

"We have exerted a lot of effort in erasing the 'car theft capital' tag attached to Quezon City, and these people want to destroy what we have done. They should be punished."

Last month, Gatdula revealed that at least two "fake" car theft cases were uncovered by the police late last year and early this year. Gatdula said that in both cases, the complainant, Andre Delgado, turned out to be the perpetrator.

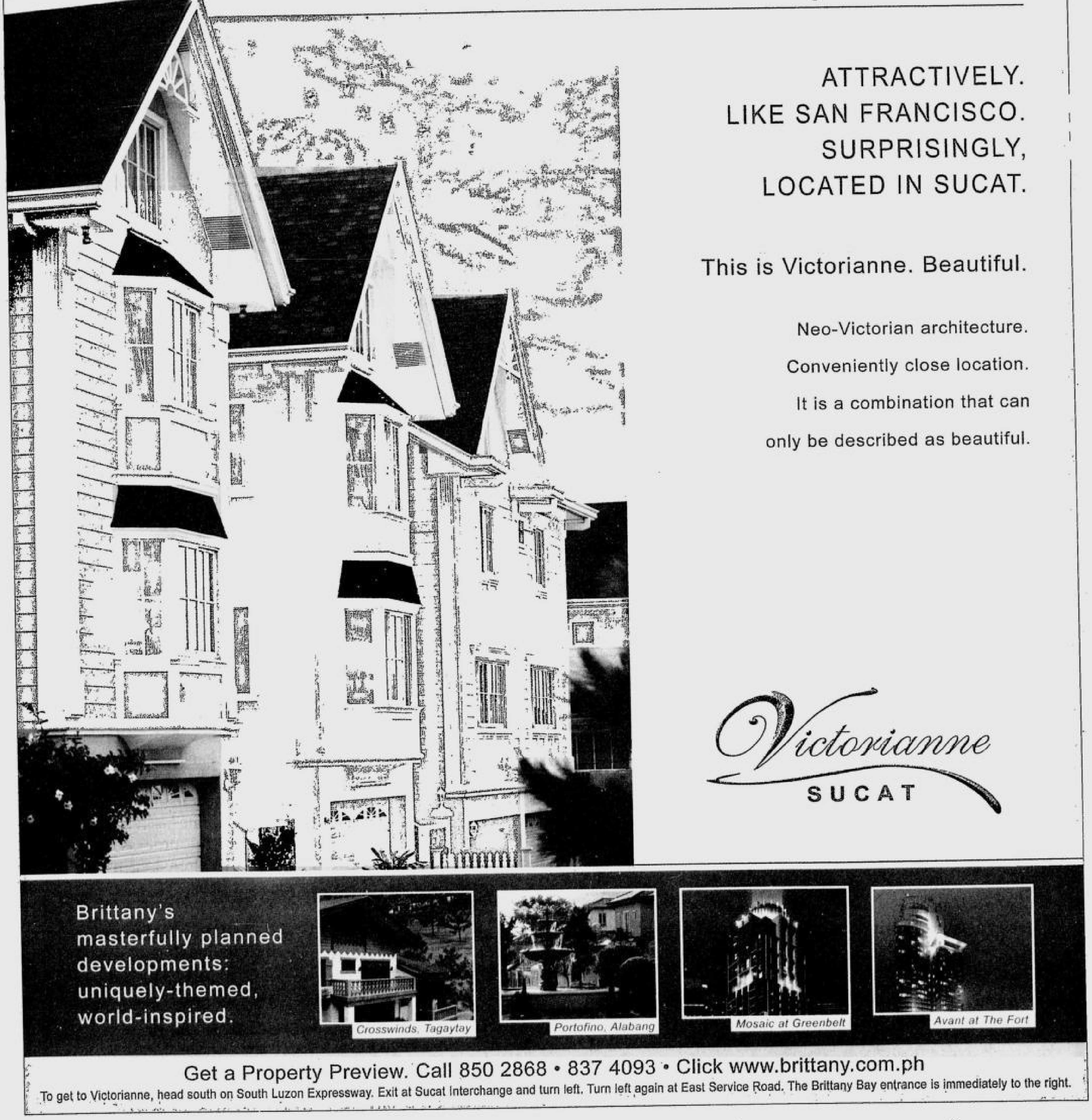
Police said Delgado reported that his brown Toyota Fortuner was forcibly taken from him by armed men in Barangay Laging Handa in December. A month later, Andre de Vera told police that a car of the same description was forcibly taken from him in the same area. Gatdula said both claimed their vehicles had no plate numbers and only bore conduction stickers.

It turned out that both conduction stickers were issued to two separate Isuzu Hi-Lander van owners. The Anti-Carnapping Unit operatives also found out that Delgado and De Vera were one and the same person.



SECURITY CHECK Members of the PNP guard a checkpoint along Marcos Highway, Cainta, Rizal for added security as the May 14 elections draws near.

RAFFY LERMA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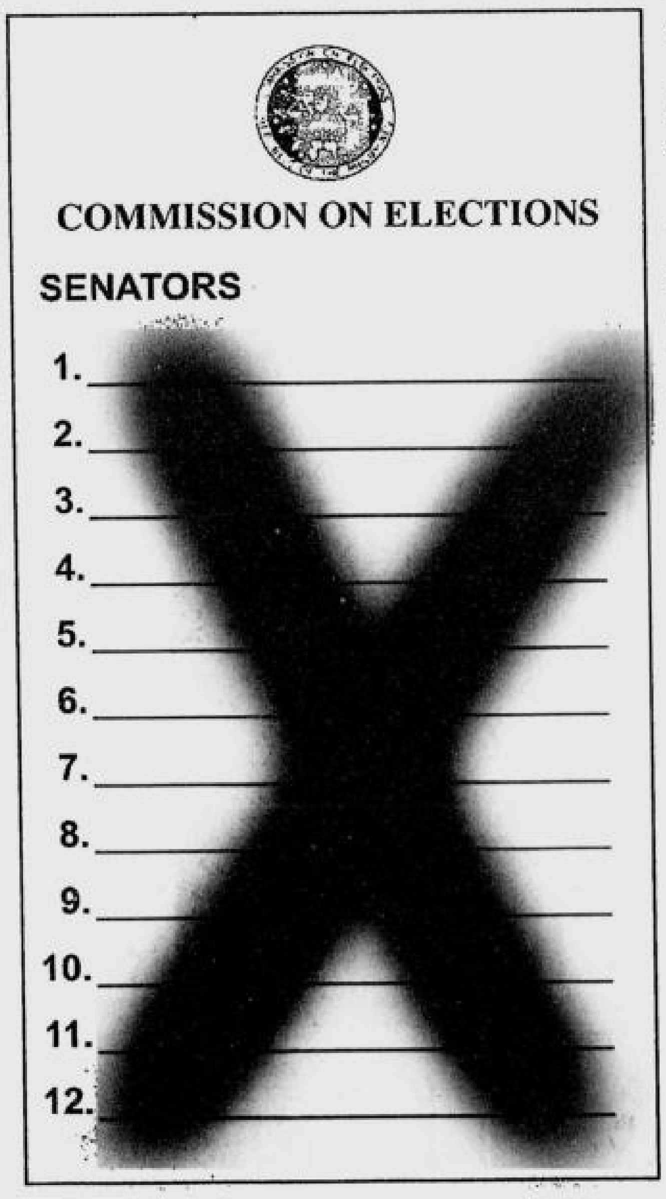
NONE OF THEM DESERVE OUR VOTE

AND HERE'S WHY:

- In 2006, they tried to abolish the Senate. Had they succeeded, all incumbent and future senators would have been "abolished." The "abolitionists" would have celebrated.
- Now, "surviving" senators Ed Angara, Joker Arroyo and Ralph Recto are running on the same Team Unity (TU) ticket with Mike Defensor, Butch Pichay, Chavit Singson and Miguel Zubiri, like long lost brothers.
- Former Senators Tito Sotto and Tessie Aquino Oreta, who once called Mrs. Gloria Macapagal Arroyo a "bogus" President, are also running on the same ticket.

IS THERE ANYTHING RIGHT WITH SUCH A TICKET?

- The "Genuine Opposition" (GO) candidates are not any better either. Most of them were never oppositionist at all. They simply think most of our people have become oppositionist, so they want to cash in on that sentiment, without ever deserving it. The reputed front-runners have already started junking each other in the hope of positioning themselves for the 2010 presidential contest.
- None of them ever bothered to work for electoral reform from 2004. But now they want everything they never worked for delivered to them. They cannot seem to understand that in order for us to have an honest election, we must work for it. We must insist on having an honest Commission on Elections, but above all we must have honest and morally upright candidates. Which we sorely lack on both sides.
- None of them have taken a principled stand on the simplest moral issues affecting themselves or their friends.
- None of them have said it is wrong for Aquilino "Koko" Pimentel III, Alan Cayetano, and Mike Defensor to be running for the Senate while Koko's father (Nene), Alan's sister (Pia), and Mike's aunt (Miriam) are sitting there until 2010.
- None of them have said it is wrong for senatorial candidates to spend tens or hundreds of millions of pesos, which they could perhaps never earn legally in their lifetime, just to land a position that carries an annual salary of less than one million pesos. Have they not already sold their soul to the devil for those millions? By what corrupt or criminal means do they expect to recover those millions, should they win?



- None of them have objected to the fact that while they are running under GO some of their closest partymates are also running under TU without having severed their party affiliation. And none of the other candidates seem to mind this repugnant setup either. They just want to win by all means, and to hell with political principles or party decencies. Thus—

1. The NPC has six senatorial candidates, two in TU — Oreta and Sotto, and four in GO— Loren Legarda, Francis Escudero, John Osmena and Nikki Coseteng.
2. The NP has three candidates —Recto in TU, and Senate President Manuel Villar and Cayetano in GO.
3. The LP has three candidates—Defensor in TU, and Noynoy Aquino and Sen. Francis Pangilinan in GO, although the latter has opted to do a solo.

This has plunged our politics into the deepest rotten pit. And none of the candidates seem to mind lying at the bottom of this pit, so long as they think they have all of us fooled and they continue to rate "high" in the inane propaganda "surveys".

- This is no longer the usual beauty contest between and among candidates and political parties. This is no less than war between the people and the politicians. We are the people, and they are the politicians.
- Despite the fact that we may know or even like some of the candidates personally, they have failed in their basic duty as candidates, and we have no moral duty to get any one of them elected.
- Unlike in the past, our duty today is not to help the opposition get rid of the administration, or vice versa. Our duty is to get rid of an entire class of political opportunists.

I do not advocate a boycott. Everyone who can vote must vote.

- But I will propose that instead of filling up our ballot with the names of unworthy candidates, we leave it blank or cross it with an "x". This will be our way of saying, none of the TU-GO candidates deserve our vote.
- We may not be able to prevent 12 undesirables from being "elected." But if the number of protest votes is significant, then none of them would be able to claim a real mandate.
- If on the other hand the number of protest votes exceeds the votes of those "elected," then it means the majority of the electorate has rejected the candidates and the process has failed. We could then begin to consider the next steps.

May God be with us. Mabuhay ang Pilipinas!

—Adapted by the Philippine Democratic Caucus and the Filipino Movement for New Politics from a speech given by former Senator Francisco S. Tatad to the Rotary Club of Pasig, April 19, 2007.

ADVT

DOH prepares for victims of poll violence

By Edson C. Tandoc Jr.

THE RISING NUMBER OF ELECTION-related violent incidents has the Department of Health on its toes, as well.

Hospitals under the department will be on Code White Alert starting today to prepare for "any unforeseen potential emergencies that may occur during the election," the DOH said in a statement yesterday.

The Code White Alert means each hospital has teams working round the clock, Emergency Management Staff Director Carmencita Banatin told the INQUIRER.

She said, this early, many government hospitals had already attended to victims of poll-related incidents.

The Philippine National Police has listed at least 102 election-related killings as of Thursday.

The DOH said that apart from doctors and nurses, emergency service, nursing and administrative personnel residing at the hospital dormitory shall be placed on an on-call status for immediate mobilization.

In some areas, local hospital officials can also raise the alert to Code Blue or Code Red status depending on the situation. Code Blue means all doctors should be in the hospital, while Code Red means the entire hospital staff has to report for work.

"We will be coordinating closely with the police to monitor the situation," Banatin added.

The DOH has already set up a national monitoring center at the East Avenue Medical Center in Quezon City.

The alert status will be sustained until Tuesday, the department said.

Newcomers with formidable pedigrees running in Makati's 2nd district

By DJ Yap

IT WILL BE A CHOICE BETween two neophytes for congressman of Makati City's second district on Monday.

Though their faces may be unfamiliar to most voters, their last names are not.

Mar-Len Abigail Binay, 31, is the daughter of Mayor Jejomar Binay. Erwin Genuino, 25, is the son Efraim Genuino, chair of the Philippine Gaming and Amusement Corp.

The similarities between the candidates are striking. Both are law graduates (although Erwin has yet to take the bar) and are taking their first big step into the world of politics.

Abigail is aware that being a Binay could prove crucial to her candidacy. It may or may not win her a seat in the House of Representatives.

"I admit that my last name is an advantage. But, beyond that, it is purely qualifications and platform that should be considered," Binay said at a recent election forum.

A practicing lawyer, Binay has been a fixture in her father's meetings with city officials and community leaders during his 18-year stint as mayor of the country's financial capital.

A graduate of the Ateneo de Manila University Law School, Binay said her advocacy is the protection of women's and children's rights.

Genuino received his law diploma only recently from the University of the Philippines.

"The disadvantage of having the Pagcor chair for a father is that the other camp accuses us of using Pagcor money to finance the campaign," said Genuino's chief of staff Red Garcia. (The candidate declined to be interviewed).

"But this is impossible. Everything is accounted for in any government-owned and -controlled corporation," he said.

Garcia said Genuino's platform of governance is focused on livelihood, health, education, and peace and order.

Interestingly, Binay and Genuino also have brothers running for councilor of Makati's District 1: Jun-Jun Binay and Anthony Genuino.

ELEKSYON 2007

Muntinlupa vice mayor faces graft charges

By Julie M. Aurelio

MAYORAL BET AND INCUMBENT Muntinlupa Vice Mayor Aldrin San Pedro has a new problem: he is now facing graft charges for alleged embezzlement of public funds.

Rowena Ann Lopez, a Muntinlupa city employee formerly assigned to the vice mayor's office, filed charges of malversation of public funds against San Pedro before the Office of the Ombudsman last May 8. Lopez alleged that San Pedro falsified public documents by approving the program and the obligation request for an employees' seminar which she claimed never took place. She added that her signature was forged on the attendance sheet of the "seminar."

San Pedro could not be reached for comment.

KBL bet withdraws in favor of Lacuna

By Allison W. Lopez

IN A SURPRISE MOVE YESTERday, the Manila mayoral candidate of the Kilusang Bagong Lipunan withdrew her candidacy and threw her support behind Vice Mayor Danilo Lacuna.

Lacuna said he was very "happy and surprised" at the withdrawal of Remedios Oyales, who he said set "no condition" for her decision.

"I'm expecting two more groups to join us tomorrow," Lacuna added. The vice mayor, however, refused to name his new allies.

Ding Diaz, spokesperson of Imelda Marcos, said Oyales was instructed by the former First Lady to pull out of the race.

Lacuna and rivals Sen. Alfredo Lim and Ali Atienza are believed to be in a tight "three-way" race for Manila mayor. Other contenders are Rep. Rudy Bacani, Maria "MJ" Jimenez, and independent lawyers Val Reloj, Norma Magat, Benjamin Rivera and Eduardo Fernandez.

A 'true Filipino'

"I'M A TRUE, NATURAL-BORN Filipino, and the Comelec itself has not just once but twice declared me to be so," Gus Tambunting, Genuine Opposition candidate for vice mayor of Parañaque, said in response to questions raised about his citizenship by certain parties.

"The Comelec first ruled that I was a Filipino citizen and eligible to run for public office in an en banc resolution in August 2006, and then again in response to a motion for reconsideration just last Feb. 7, 2007," Tambunting pointed out.

"It's a pity that my opponents are trying to dig up this old and long-resolved citizenship issue for lack of any valid issues to raise against me. The main issue in this campaign is performance," the Parañaque vice mayoralty candidate said.

"For my part, not only am I a true Filipino but a true son of Parañaque," said Tambunting, who promised to expand his poverty-alleviation programs.

Friendly Care
JCB

HEALTH CARE FOR PDI NEWSBOYS
The Philippine Daily Inquirer's Circulation Department launched "Project Invest" last May 6 aimed at promoting health and wellness practices among its newsboys and dealers. The event was highlighted with medical checkups for the newsboys and their relatives at the Friendly Care Clinic along Shaw Boulevard in Mandaluyong City. EUGENE ARANETA

Court agrees to hospital transfer of hostage-taker

By Allison W. Lopez and Aaron John del Rosario

FOR HUMANITARIAN REASONS, A Manila court yesterday ordered the immediate transfer of hostage-taker Armando "Jun" Ducat from a government hospital to the Cardinal Santos Hospital.

The 56-year-old engineer, who is facing multiple charges of illegal detention, was brought to the Ospital Ng Maynila after he complained of chest pains during his arraignment on Tuesday.

Judge Amelia Tria-Infante of the Manila Regional Trial Court Branch 9 granted the petition to move Ducat to the private hospital in San Juan after City Hall doctors attested to his frail condition. The court, however, said the accused should be "heavily escorted" by the Bureau of Jail Management and Penology (BJMP).

Defense counsel William de los Santos said the prosecutors initially objected to the petition and only suggested that he be brought to the Philippine General Hospital, but the lawyers countered that Ducat's life was "at stake."

"We should not toy with life of the accused. He has not been convicted yet," he said.

Ducat had an angioplasty two weeks before he detained 26 kids and three teachers inside a bus in Manila on March 28. De los Santos said Ducat suffered a persistent heart problem and needed to undergo a series of checkups, including an angiogram.

Trader found guilty of libel

By Julie M. Aurelio

A PASAY CITY REGIONAL TRIAL court found guilty of libel the other day a businessman who had accused Vice President Noli de Castro of trying to extort P2 million from him.

Rafael Engle was sentenced to two years in jail, three years after the accusation was published in a local broadsheet.

In his decision, RTC Branch 115 Judge Francisco Mendiola said: "After a careful review of the entire record, the Court finds that the prosecution proved its case of libel against the accused beyond reasonable doubt."

The businessman was also ordered to pay a fine of P6,000. Engle was not present when Mendiola handed down the decision. He was reported to have left the country in 2004.

"There can be no dispute as to the defamatory nature of the statements made by the accused against the complaining Noli de Castro. Accused imputed to the complaining witness the commission of a crime of extortion and blackmail and that Noli de Castro had made false stories in his TV program. These discreditable acts cast aspersions and caused dishonor, discredit and contempt upon the complaining witness," part of the decision read.

"Noteworthy is the failure of the accused to be present after the commencement of the trial of this case as he has jumped bail. His flight is an additional indication of his guilt," the judge pointed out.

In absentia

Since the trial began in 2004, Engle was tried in absentia after he jumped bail and did not attend the subsequent hearings.

Engle first surfaced in 2004 when he accused De Castro of trying to extort from him P2 million in 1995. The businessman claimed the staff of Magandang Gabi Bayan approached him and offered to help him find his missing wife.

However, Engle alleged a member of the MGB crew told him to prepare P2 million so the episode would come out favorable to Engle.

Refusing to pay up, Engle said he was shocked when MGB aired an episode naming him as his wife's abductor.

He was earlier accused in court of kidnapping his wife. Engle was later acquitted of the charges.

Pineda will win in Pampanga and Custodio in Gen. Santos

ON TARGET
Ramon Tulfo

THE CLOSELY-WATCHED fights in the electoral contests are in Pampanga and South Cotabato.

Board Member Lilia "Baby" Pineda and Catholic priest Ed Panlilio are reportedly neck-and-neck in the Pampanga gubernatorial race, with the incumbent, Gov. Mark Lapid, running a poor third. But the Pampanga elite, who support Panlilio, will have the surprise of their lives when results are counted: Pineda will come out the winner.

Panlilio may have "awesome" attendance in his campaign rallies, but that's not a gauge of how people will vote on Monday, May 14.

Pineda, long before this electoral contest, has invested much time, effort and resources in looking after the welfare of the province's poor who compose the majority.

She may not be a "saint" as Panlilio is pictured to be since she's married to alleged jueteng lord Bong Pineda, but Baby Pineda is loved by the destitute.

In South Cotabato, boxing champion and idol Manny Pacquiao will suffer humiliation at the hands of a woman, incumbent Rep. Darlene Custodio.

Surveys show Custodio leading the political upstart "Pacman" by a mile in South Cotabato and General Santos City.

* * *

If former Davao del Norte Gov. Rodolfo del Rosario, who's trying to make a comeback in the province, is supported by his brother-in-law, banana king Antonio Floirendo Sr., he will handily win the gubernatorial post.

But Floirendo is supporting the incumbent, Gov. Yayong Gementiza.

Money from Floirendo's Tagum Development Co. (Tadeco) is being brought to bear against Del Rosario, Floirendo's former protégé, whom the 91-year-old banana king considers an "ingrate."

* * *

I'm dismayed at the results of the Social Weather Stations (SWS) survey showing Genuine Opposition senatorial candidate Luis "Chavit" Singson ranking 25th, far from the "Magic 12."

Singson is very much misunderstood. If people knew his character they would vote for him.

Singson, Ilocos Sur governor, is a very solicitous leader to his constituents.

I can't count the times Singson personally accompanied constituents to my defunct radio public service program, "Isumbong mo kay Tulfo," so I could immediately attend to their complaints.

Singson would wait with his wards at the lobby of the radio station dwIZ while my staff and I attended to other complainants who came in first.

Singson's wards were victims of illegal recruitment and he would ask me to give them "special attention." He would badger my staff and me about the results of his wards' complaints.

Now, tell me which politician ever did that for his constituents?

* * *

If I know Armed Forces Chief of Staff Gen. Hermogenes Esperon, he's as concerned over the abduction of Jonas Joseph Burgos, as the victim's relatives and sympathizers.

That is, if his rank and position haven't changed him.

I remember the time I brought an auto mechanic, who had been severely beaten up by one of his men, to Esperon, then chief of the Presidential Security Group.

Esperon not only punished the offending soldier.

He had him pay for the hospital bills and ordered him to compensate the victim.

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US House votes to handcuff Bush on Iraq funds

WASHINGTON—US LAWMAKERS Thursday voted to fund the Iraq combat in installments of just a few months, defying President George W. Bush's veto vow in the latest tussle of a political feud over control of the war.

The House of Representatives voted by 221 votes to 205 to release $43 billion in emergency war funds, but told Bush he must show progress in Iraq in July, before collecting another $53 billion in financing.

"This legislation ends the blank check for the president's war without end," Democratic House speaker Nancy Pelosi said.

Bush "has grown accustomed to the free hand on Iraq he had before Jan. 4. Those days are over," she added.

The legislation now moves to the more closely divided Senate, where the split financing component appears unlikely to survive, lining up an intense round of legislative bartering over the bill Bush will be asked to sign.

The Democrat-led House had earlier rejected a largely symbolic bid by the majority party's anti-war block to get troops out of Iraq within six months of enactment.

Under-fire Bush earlier fought back hard, after Democrats gleefully pounced on signs of softening Republican backing for his last-ditch bid to surge nearly 30,000 more troops into war-scarred Iraq.

"I'll veto the bill if it is this haphazard, piecemeal funding, and I made that clear," he said after visiting the Defense Department.

Even if Bush vetoes it, the measure sets out the House's bargaining position for the final war-funding bill, which must be worked out with the Senate and the White House. All parties hope to strike a deal on final terms by the end of May.

Bush wielded his veto for only the second time last week to strike down a bill tying war funding to a Democratic timeline to start bringing home 146,000 troops in Iraq in October, from a war which has killed 3,379 of their comrades.

But Democrats sense the president is increasingly vulnerable.

"I think this president is more isolated than any president since Richard Nixon in his final days," Democratic Sen. Chuck Schumer told reporters, referring to the disgraced former US leader who was forced to resign in 1974.

Bush did make an apparently conciliatory step by saying that Democratic demands that the Iraqi government meet certain political and security benchmarks made sense.

But he stopped short of endorsing his rivals' call for robust penalties should the fragile Baghdad administration fall short.

Pelosi countered: "benchmarks without consequences and enforcement are meaningless." House Minority Leader John Boehner, an Ohio Republican, said: "one can only describe today's proceedings as grossly negligent." Vice President Dick Cheney, who just visited Iraq, told Fox News however that the benchmarks wrangle was simply "Washington talk" and noted Iraqis surely felt more pressured to act by raging violence than threats from Congress.

Bush's growing vulnerability was meanwhile underscored by news of a White House visit by 11 concerned Republican House members on Tuesday, which followed warnings by top Republicans that a "Plan B" might be needed if there is no clear success by September for the current US surge in Iraq.

"I've been to a lot of meetings with the president about the war. This was one of the toughest, frankest, no-holds-barred meetings," said Republican lawmaker Ray LaHood who was at Tuesday's meeting.

September is emerging as a possible make-or-break point for US Iraq strategy, as Gen. David Petraeus, American commander in the country, is expected to outline results of the surge.

"If the report is not good, it is going to be very, very difficult," LaHood said. *AFP*

Olmert: Israel's killing of civilians extended war

JERUSALEM—IN CONFIDENTIAL TESTIMONY on last summer's war with the Lebanese militia Hezbollah, Prime Minister Ehud Olmert said that the Israeli killing of a group of civilians in Qana in late July was a turning point that delayed a diplomatic resolution.

"The fact is, if Qana hadn't happened, there is good reason to believe that we would have been in a very good position to complete the process," he said in testimony released after editing for security purposes. The Qana bombing, which Olmert said damaged Israel's case abroad, occurred when Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice was in Israel trying to secure a cease-fire.

Olmert was responding to questions from the Winograd Commission, which is investigating the war. His comments were in testimony made public Thursday that included accounts by Defense Minister Amir Peretz and Lt. Gen. Dan Halutz, who resigned in January as military chief of staff.

Their testimony, given in confidence without lawyers present, was made public after the Israeli Supreme Court agreed it should be, and was redacted by the military censor.

Two of the five members of the commission, which was appointed by the government and led by a retired judge, Eliyahu Winograd, condemned the publication. Ruth Gavison, a law professor, and Menachem Einan, a reserve general, said that to publish statements given in a closed session, even if vetted to prevent harm to security or to Israel's foreign relations, would discourage officials from testifying freely.

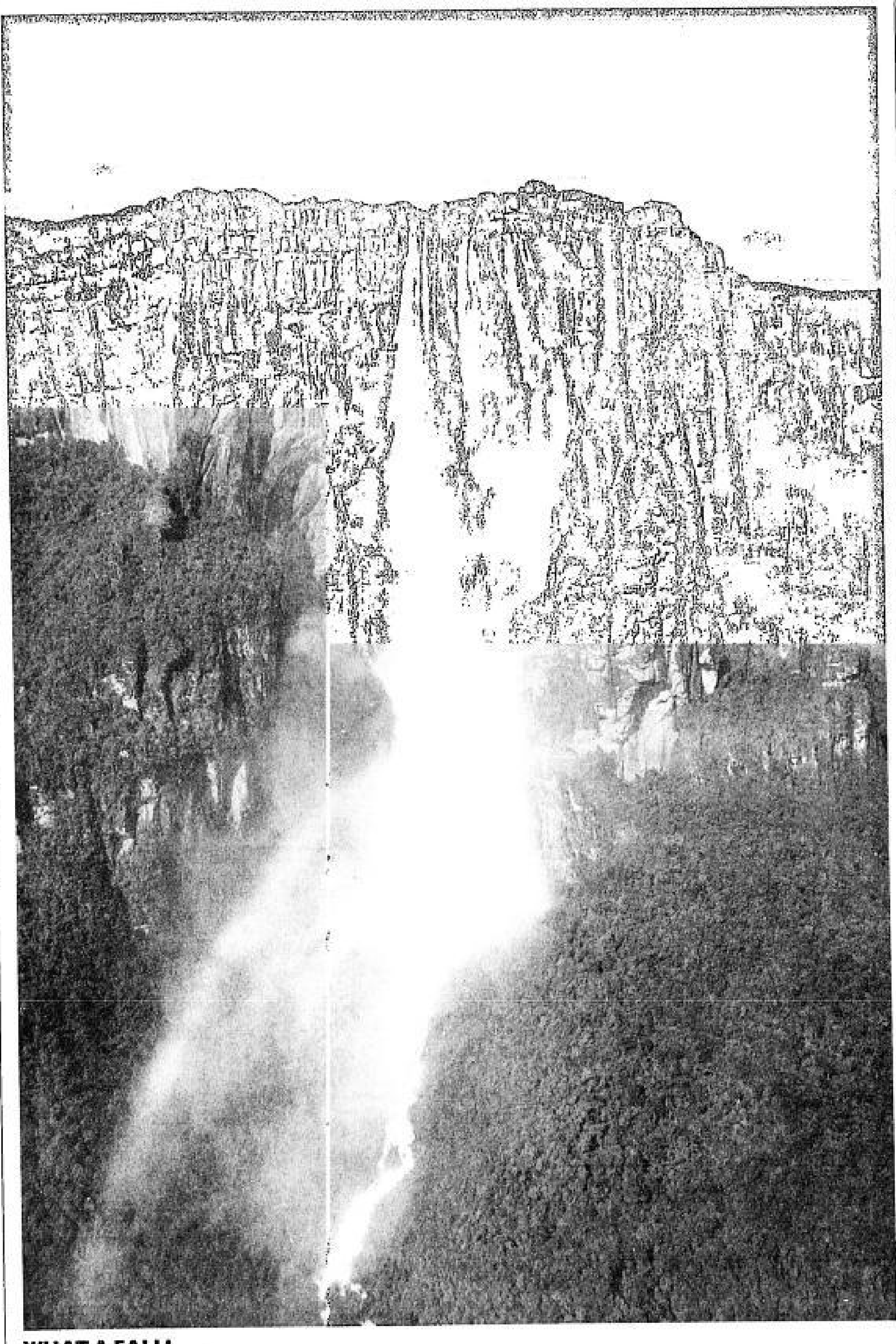
In his testimony, Olmert said, "I really feel that I can talk to you about everything, and I know what I say won't leave this room."

In Qana, the Israelis said, they were responding to rocket fire. Qana has symbolic importance because Israeli shells killed many civilians there 10 years before in a similar incident. The new deaths created a furor, and Prime Minister Fouad Siniora of Lebanon asked Rice to cancel her trip to Beirut. The war went on for almost two more weeks.

Olmert said he should have met with his security Cabinet more frequently. "I'm assuming I, too, made mistakes," he said. "I say at the central junctures at which decisions were made, we acted responsibly and I believe very reasonably."

In its partial report, the commission was harsh in its judgments of Olmert, Peretz and Halutz. Olmert has said he will not resign but will try to fix the flaws.

"I think the army disappointed itself not a little," Olmert said in the testimony. *New York Times News Service*



WHAT A FALL!
In this photo released by explorer Charles Brewer Carias, Angel Falls, the world's tallest waterfall, which plunges from the top of Auyan Tepui in the Gran Sabana region in Venezuela is seen in all its splendor on Jan. 20, 2006. AP

Hubble's successor hopes to peer back at universe's birth

WASHINGTON—ONCE UNFURLED IN ORBIT in 2013, the world's biggest space telescope will have an eagle-eyed camera that scientists hope will lift the veil from the origins and mysteries of the universe.

The US space agency unveiled in Washington on Thursday a full-scale model of the James Webb Space Telescope (JWST), a probe bejeweled with new technologies that will succeed the aging but invaluable Hubble telescope in 2013.

Scientists hope the telescope, named after the man who ran Nasa from 1961 to 1968, will peer back to the first stars after the "Big Bang" and the formation of solar systems capable of hosting life.

The telescope, a joint project of the US, European and Canadian space agencies, will be three times bigger than Hubble, with a hexagonal mirror 6.5 meters (21.3 feet) in diameter and five-layer sunshield the size of a tennis court.

The probe being built by Northrop Grumman Corp. will incorporate 10 new technologies, including an infrared camera and a spectrometer kept at an extremely low temperature for optimum performance. The telescope is expected to have a 10-year lifespan.

The model was put on display Thursday in front of Washington's National Air and Space Museum.

Launched 17 years ago, Hubble revolutionized astronomy by peering deep into the universe, beaming back dazzling images free of the distortions from Earth's atmosphere.

Orbiting 575 kilometers (360 miles) above Earth, the Hubble has enabled scientists to better measure the age and origins of the universe, observe distant supernovas, and identify and study bodies in and outside the solar system.

While Hubble was able to peer back to one billion years after the Big Bang, officials said the new telescope, with mirrors that will capture six times more light than its predecessor, will look even further into the origins of the universe—by seeing light emitted from even more distant objects that has taken hundreds of millions of years to travel this far.

"Clearly we need a much bigger telescope to go back much further in time to see the very birth of the universe," Edward Weiler, director of Nasa's Goddard Space Flight Center, told a news conference.

Hubble, along with space telescopes Chandra and Spitzer, have shown that the universe is hiding many mysteries, but they are unable to solve them, said Matt Mountain, director of the Space Telescope Science Institute near Washington.

"We cannot penetrate the darkness of the time when the first galaxies were born," Mountain said.

The current telescopes are also unable to provide answers about black holes and the enigmatic dark matter, he said.

With its more powerful mirrors, the new telescope "for the first time will send images from that dark age, high resolution pictures," he said.

The $4.5 billion James Webb Space Telescope will be folded to fit inside a European Ariane V rocket in 2013 and will unfurl 1.5 million kilometers (0.93 million miles) from Earth.

Nasa plans to launch a space shuttle mission next year to upgrade and maintain Hubble in order to keep it operational through 2013.

Without a repair mission, the telescope would shut down in 2009 or even earlier, dealing a blow to scientists who have relied on Hubble's images to better understand the universe.

"Before Hubble humans could only imagine the universe," Mountain said. "Now they can see it." *AFP*

Party of 'untouchables' set to win in Indian state

NEW DELHI—A PARTY CHAMPIONING India's lowest castes appeared set to head a coalition government after elections in the country's most populous state of Uttar Pradesh, early trends from the counting of votes showed on Friday.

They also indicated a setback for the Hindu nationalist Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP), the country's main opposition party, which was hoping to gain seats and consolidate what some analysts said was a revival of its fortunes.

Congress, which is in power at the center but has lost out to state-based parties in what was once a stronghold, also seemed unlikely to make gains despite a high profile campaign by Rahul Gandhi, heir apparent of India's most famous political family.

Although the election in the Hindi heartland state—home to 170 million people—was fought largely on local issues, its outcome is expected to help shape the political direction for Congress and BJP ahead of 10 state elections due next year and national polls in 2009.

The Bahujan Samaj Party (BSP), which represents India's former "untouchables," was leading in 185 seats in the 403-member state legislature, nearly 20 seats short of a majority, TV channels said.

While the party, headed by a fiery teacher-turned-politician Mayawati, who uses only one name, is not expected to bridge the gap, it could form a coalition with the support of independent members or even Congress, analysts said.

This time, Mayawati sewed up an unlikely alliance with the Brahmins, those on top of the Hindu caste hierarchy, touting it as a coming together of economically marginalized classes rather than just a caste-based relationship.

The ruling Samajwadi Party (SP) was in second position, leading in 90-95 seats. The BJP was ahead in nearly 70 seats, lower than its tally of 88 in the outgoing assembly.

"Ultimately the people of Uttar Pradesh decided to wait on Mayawati," BJP spokesperson Ravi Shankar Prasad told reporters.

"But let me tell you I see great hope for the future in the coming battle of 2009." Surveys and exit polls had predicted the BJP would win around 110 seats, firming up a revival of the party which suffered a shock defeat in national polls in 2004 and struggled for direction before winning two small states this year.

They had also forecast a hung legislature in a state where politics is fragmented by caste and religious loyalties, leading to a lack of development, corruption and high crime levels. *Reuters*

PRIME Minister Tony Blair (right) and his probable successor, Gordon Brown. AP

Asian press: Blair 'the articulate half' of UK-US alliance

HONG KONG—ASIAN COMMENTATORS Friday praised outgoing British Prime Minister Tony Blair's deft handling of the Northern Ireland peace process as arguably his greatest legacy but some criticized his role in Iraq.

The Bangkok Post said Blair had been steadfast in his decision-making, in Northern Ireland and Iraq as well as on domestic matters including reforms to the British health system.

On Iraq, it argued that "as the articulate half of the British-American alliance, Mr. Blair's glib and tightly reasoned arguments prevailed where Mr. Bush's stumbling might have failed." "When a major portion of the British public turned against the war, Mr. Blair insisted on pressing on. He still does," it added.

Blair announced on Thursday that he will resign as prime minister on June 27 after a decade in office, clearing the way for his current finance minister, Gordon Brown, to succeed him.

For the Singapore-based Straits Times, "probably the finest legacy he leaves the British people is the peace he has brought to Northern Ireland." "Mr. Blair's achievement would rank on a par with President Charles de Gaulle's ending of the Algerian civil war to heal the French soul. Mr. Blair should be leaving office on a high," it said in an editorial.

The Indian Express hailed Blair, saying he had "modernized the very idea of left-of-center politics" and described as "astonishing" his decision to step down without having lost a decisive vote within the governing Labor Party or parliament.

"It would be a pity if his modernizing paradigm were ignored and early appraisal based only on the current operational mess in Iraq," it said.

Australia's Daily Telegraph said in an editorial that Blair had "given his nation and the world valiant and skillful service," especially in the face of terrorism.

"That unchanging recognition of the fact that the only way to oppose terrorism was to take up arms in the fight, and to battle the enemy for as long as it takes, is destined to be the proud hallmark of his time," it went on.

Australia and Britain have both been staunch allies of US President George W. Bush over the invasion of Iraq and contributed troops despite huge domestic opposition. *AFP*

The WORLD

Editor **Luverne B. Gueco**

Pope to Brazil youth: Shun sex, drugs

SAO PAULO—POPE BENEDICT TOLD YOUNG Brazilians to avoid sex before marriage and say no to drugs at a huge rally on Thursday in this country renowned for its lusty attitude toward sex.

Young men and women should build their lives around their families and stay faithful to their spouses once married, the Pope told more than 30,000 excited youths packed into a soccer stadium in Sao Paulo.

"Be promoters of life, from its beginning to its natural end," he said, seated on an elaborately carved red throne.

On his first trip to Latin America since taking office, the Pope is reinforcing Roman Catholic teachings against abortion and in support of traditional family values. He is also trying to turn back a tide of defections of Catholics to Protestant groups.

Brazil is the world's most populous Catholic nation but many ignore Church teachings on sex and birth control, and the government has upset the Vatican by handing out free condoms.

At the Pacaembu stadium, young men and women sang and danced with typical Brazilian joyfulness to Christian rock music before the 80-year-old Pope took to the stage. A priest led thousands in a chant of "Life yes, abortion no." Even so, many teenage couples kissed and groped each other as they waited on the sports field for the Pope to arrive.

In a long speech, he urged them to live their lives by a strict moral code and not to waste their youth.

He decried the violence that scars Brazilian society and the high death rate among its youths, the "deplorable proliferation of drugs" and discrimination. "I send you out, therefore, on the great mission of evangelizing young men and women who have gone astray in this world like sheep without a shepherd," he said.

Not everyone agreed with his message.

"The Church should defend the use of condoms and campaign against promiscuity at the same time. They have to be realistic," said Felipe Silveira, 21, an engineering student from Rio de Janeiro who said he went to church regularly. Asked if he was a virgin, he smiled and said "No."

Robson de Campos, 20, took a 16-hour bus ride from Minas Gerais state to attend the rally.

"It's great that he's speaking to young people, so many young people in this country need guidance," he said.

But on the issues of contraception and sex, he said: "It's wrong, the Church needs to be more flexible." The Pontiff met earlier with President Luiz Inacio Lula da Silva, whose government has been criticized by Church leaders for distributing millions of condoms in an anti-AIDS program and for questioning the Vatican's tough stance on abortion.

The two men avoided the condom and abortion issues in their meeting, officials said.

Polls show many Brazilians feel the Church is out of touch but others support the Pope's line.

"The Church has positions that are tough to abide by in the modern world but we have to uphold these principles," said Lucila Betting, a grandmother in her 60s who waited outside the Sao Paulo state governors' palace for a glimpse of the Pope.

"It's very hard to be a Catholic mom today," she said.

To many Latin Americans, Pope Benedict is an enigma, with a reputation as a conservative theologian who has spent most of his career cloistered in the Vatican.

In contrast, his charismatic predecessor, Pope John Paul, was hugely popular across the region, home to nearly half the world's 1.1 billion Catholics.

Pope Benedict is due to give the keynote address on Sunday to a conference of Latin American and Caribbean bishops in the town of Aparecida where finding ways to halt the loss of Catholics to Protestant groups will be a prime task.

Reuters

POPE Benedict XVI at the Pacaembu Stadium in Sao Paulo on May 10. AP

RAMOS-HORTA REUTERS/

Ramos-Horta's landslide win may help unify E. Timor

DILI—NOBEL PEACE PRIZE WINner Jose Ramos-Horta won nearly 70 percent of the votes in East Timor's presidential runoff, officials said on Friday, raising hopes his strong mandate can bring greater stability to the tiny nation.

European Union monitors endorsed the election, but the result still needs to be signed off by the country's court of appeal.

The mood in the capital appeared calm on Friday, with no sign of celebrations or protests in a nation still struggling to heal divisions five years after it won independence from Indonesia.

Ramos-Horta urged supporters of his election opponent Francisco Guterres, a former guerrilla fighter and president of the ruling Fretilin party, to be calm.

"I appeal to Fretilin members so that they don't feel that they have lost. I have said it is the people that have won, it is democracy that has won," the 57-year-old, who is currently prime minister, told reporters at the government building.

EU poll observers commended the way Wednesday's election was carried out, after the first round a month ago was marred by complaints of widespread irregularities.

Guterres said he was prepared to accept defeat and also urged Fretilin supporters to stay calm and respect the outcome.

"For me personally I am ready to accept the result of the elections and if I lose I will accept it with a big heart," the former guerrilla told supporters at his residence in the capital. Ramos-Horta and Guterres won the most votes in the first round of eight candidates, but neither had a clear majority, forcing the extra round.

All votes had now been counted at the district level, although some ballots were still on their way to Dili, election commission spokesperson Maria Angelina Sarmento said.

Ramos-Horta won 69 percent, while Guterres got 31 percent.

The grey-haired Ramos-Horta, widely viewed as more friendly to the West, has pledged to work closely with the international community and speed up economic development.

East Timor is rich in energy resources such as natural gas but is only beginning to exploit them. In the meantime, many of its million people are unemployed and most are poor.

"Ramos-Horta is expected to bring stability to the country," said political analyst Julio Thomas.

Reuters

2nd major California fire razes resort island

LOS ANGELES—A FAST-MOVING wildfire on the southern California resort of Santa Catalina Island forced residents and tourists to the waterfront on Thursday as flames burned thousands of acres and heavy ash fell over the area.

Many residents in the main town of Avalon, which was virtually surrounded by fire, were ordered to evacuate their homes. Along with the visitors, they boarded ferries that whisked them to the mainland about 35 km away.

It was the second major fire this week in southern California, which is suffering its driest year on record.

The Los Angeles County Fire Department said 1,600 hectares had burned on the island. At least one house and several small businesses were destroyed, according to news report.

The US Navy provided hovercrafts that brought in fire engines from the Los Angeles area. More than 300 firefighters were on the ground, but aerial water drops were suspended until daybreak.

Some people in Avalon wore scarves to protect them from the smoke and ash, while orange flames cast an eerie glow over the idyllic harbor and its flotilla of boats. Evacuation was mandatory for only part of the town, which is home to 3,200 full-time residents.

The fire broke out shortly after noon. No cause had been determined.

The island blaze comes just as Los Angeles firefighters gained control of an 330-hectare brush fire that scarred the city's Griffith Park and forced the evacuation of a wealthy Hollywood Hills neighborhood.

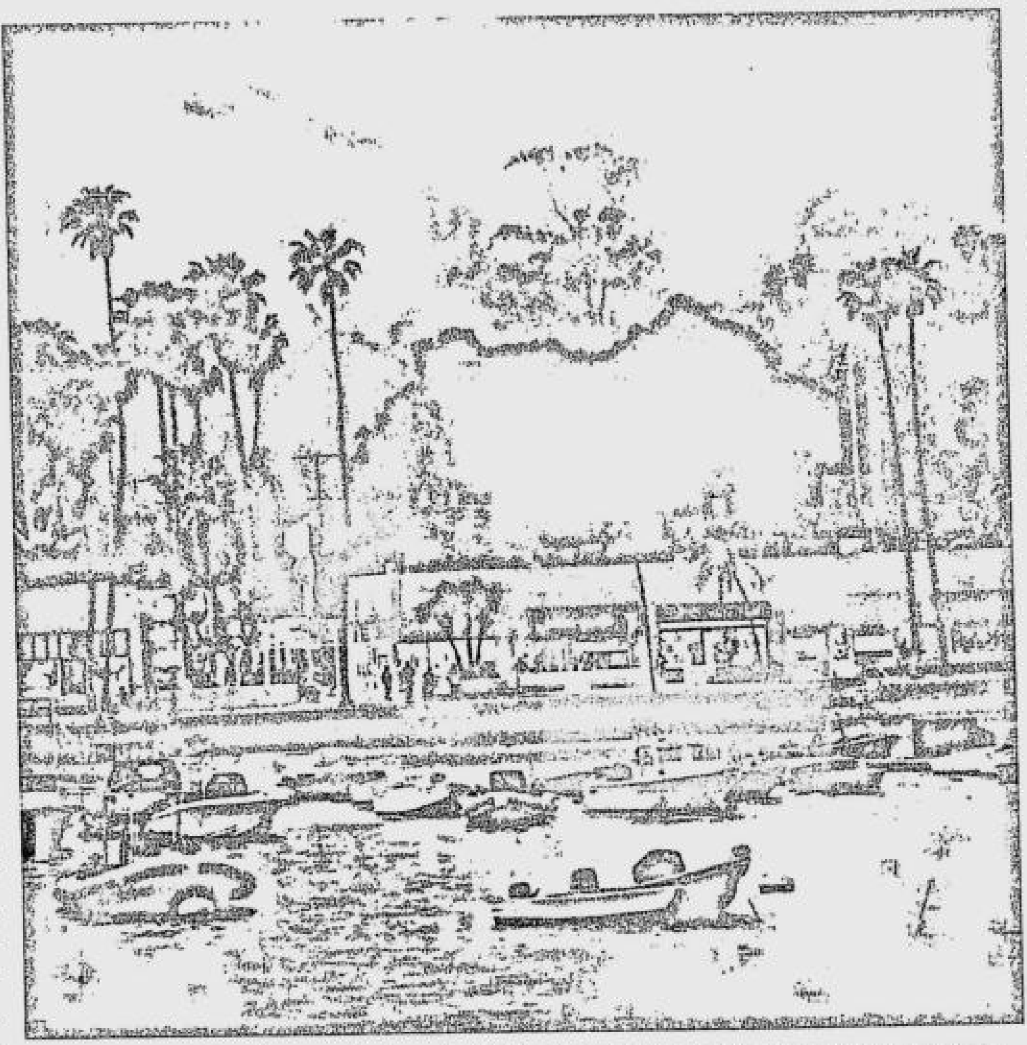
Catalina has had just 5 cm (2 inches) of rain since January and residents said they had never seen such a dangerous wildfire or one that threatened Avalon.

The Los Angeles fire was considered the worst in the Hollywood Hills in 50 years and local officials feared it was a sign of things to come.

"We are facing an incredibly difficult fire season," Los Angeles Mayor Antonio Villaraigosa said.

Gov. Arnold Schwarzenegger has issued an executive order to mobilize more personnel and equipment to respond to wildfires.

Reuters



SMOKE from a wildfire rises over Avalon on the California resort island of Catalina on May 10. The 400-acre wildfire erupted on Thursday, forcing evacuations just as firefighters were mopping up a blaze at another Southern California playground, Los Angeles' sprawling Griffith Park. AP

Exam board tags papers to deter cheating

LONDON—STUDENTS TAKING GCSE and A-level exams this month were warned on Friday that they would be caught if they bought stolen papers.

Exam board Edexcel said they had put shop-style security tags into the packages of papers sent to schools and colleges to trace any that went missing.

Examiners would also be able to spot unexpectedly good performances by individual students or groups of candidates by comparing their results with their achievements in other subjects and over previous years.

"I want to raise the belief in students that if you cheat you will get caught," Edexcel Managing Director Jerry Jarvis told BBC radio.

"We are going to be able to track very precisely exactly where every paper is going, using a radio frequency tagging system.

"That enables us to track the source of the leak very quickly when a paper comes to light." The exam board said there were 70 reports of security breaches last summer, including the theft of an A-level statistics paper, out of the 620,000 packages of papers it despatched.

In 2004, maths, chemistry and biology A-level papers were stolen from a college safe in northwest London, photocopied and offered for sale to pupils.

The year before a teacher at a south London school was jailed for three months after being convicted of stealing five GCSE papers.

The board said the exam papers would also be packed in secure bags which would show if they had been opened ahead of time.

It said 90 percent of candidate scripts would be scanned into computers, enabling senior examiners quickly to check the work of any students whose submissions were suspect.

Reuters

Panel: Asian 'trainees' in Japan must be protected

TOKYO—ASIAN WORKERS brought to Japan under a "trainee" system seen by critics as a cover for widespread abuse of cheap labor should be protected by the law, a government panel said on Friday.

The report met with a guarded welcome from trade union officials and criticism from the Trade Ministry.

Touted on its 1990 launch as a way of helping developing countries by teaching technical skills, Japan's foreign trainee program has come under fire for everything from nonpayment of wages to virtual imprisonment and sexual harassment of workers.

"Trainees are being used as cheap labor," the panel said in a report. "They are taken on by small companies where working conditions are not properly monitored and it is difficult to ensure that they are treated as trainees." The labor ministry's panel of experts, set up last year after abuses came under a media spotlight, urged that changes such as the introduction of formal employment contracts for workers and stiffer penalties for companies who mistreat them, be made law by the spring of 2010.

"I appreciate the fact that they have recognized there is an extremely serious problem," said Ippei Torii, secretary general of the All United Workers Union, which provides legal and other support to trainees suffering abuse.

"However, I don't see anything here that will help those who are suffering right now," he added, saying the proposed legislation is likely to meet strong opposition.

The current system allows foreigners to spend a year in Japan as trainees, and to stay on another two years as workers, entitled to minimum wages and overtime pay. The report recommends treating the trainees as contracted workers from the start to give them better legal protection.

More than 83,000 people arrived in Japan as trainees last year, adding to tens of thousands already here, according to the Japan International Training Cooperation Organization, (JITCO) a partly government-funded body which supervises the program.

Far from learning about Japan's state-of-the art technology, a large proportion of the mostly Chinese participants find themselves in food processing factories or garment sweatshops, sometimes with their passports confiscated to prevent them from escaping.

Deductions from their allowances leave some with a pittance to live on.

JITCO says Japanese companies see the program as a way to contribute to poorer countries in the region. But critics say it is merely a way of propping up small businesses that would otherwise collapse in the face of increasing international competition and a shortage of young people.

Go Takizawa, an official at the industrial personnel division of the Trade Ministry said he welcomed the attempt to boost legal protection for foreign trainees, but was concerned that the program was straying from its initial aims.

Reuters

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How to send an International MMS
To create an MMS message, insert picture and text message then send to
+ • country code • mobile code • mobile number

How to activate MMS service
Send **GPRS ON** and **MMS ON** to 333.

How to request for GPRS Settings
Send **SET GPRS <phone model>** to 211.
Ex: SET GPRS N6680

How to make an International 3G Video Call
Dial: + • country code • mobile code • mobile number
Choose "Video Call" in Calling Options

Reminder: Person to be called should have a 3G Phone and should be in a 3G area.

How to make an International Voice Text
1. To Send:
★8900 • country code • area code • phone number
Example: Dial ★8900966509244444
2. To Retrieve: Call the retrieval code reflected in the SMS alert or dial
★9900 • country code • area code • phone number
Example: Dial ★9900966509244444
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WHAT'S INSIDE

▨ **Pistons** make it 3-0 against Bulls /A34

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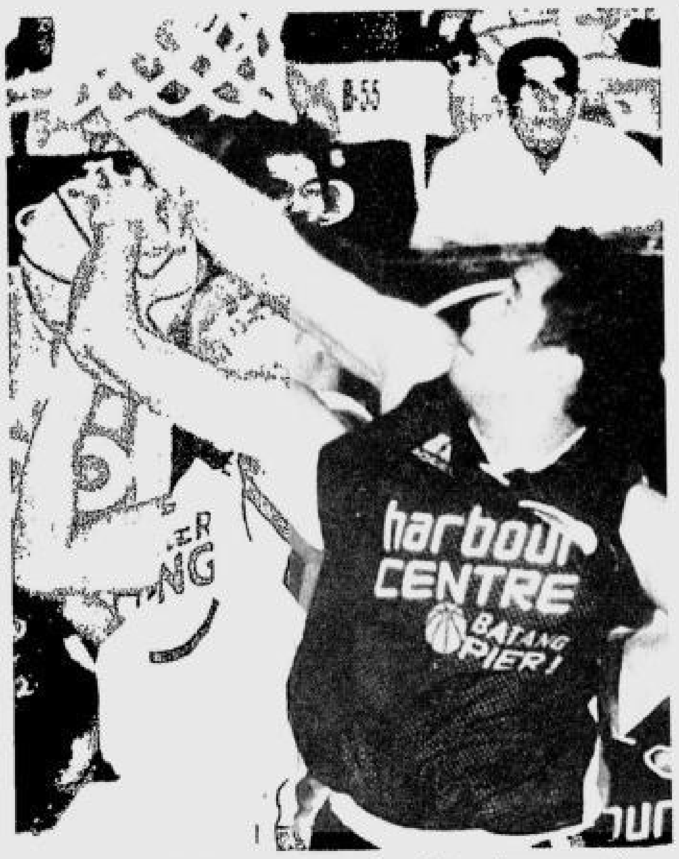
▨ **What's** bugging Federer? /A34

Harbour guns for No. 7 vs Toyota



BURGER King's Ronjay Buenafe goes for a shot under pressure from Harbour Centre's Marvin Ortiguerra in Thursday's game won by the Batang Pier, 84-79.

INQUIRER PHOTO/ RYAN LIM

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Cebuana takes on Magnolia

COACH GEORGE GALLENT OF HARBOUR Center is quite thankful that his front court got a fitting warm-up before tangling with Toyota Balintawak today in the PBL Unity Cup.

STANDINGS	W	L
Harbour	6	1
C Lhuillier	5	2
Burger King	4	3
Henkel	4	4
Toyota Bal	3	4
Magnolia	2	5
Dazz	1	6

GAMES TODAY (*The Arena, San Juan*)

12 noon—San Miguel-Magnolia vs Cebuana Lhuillier

2 p.m.—Dazz 'Sang Patak vs Burger King

4 p.m.—Harbour Centre vs Toyota Bal.

Batang Pier, which often capitalize on their backcourt depth, found unexpected relief from the burly trio of Chad Alonzo, Beau Belga and Edwin Asoro in their recent win over Burger King.

"It's a big win for us since we're playing Toyota next," said Gallent. "Toyota is the number one rebounding team, so our big men have to step up again and control the boards."

The defending champions will go for their seventh straight win against the Road Kings at 4 p.m. at The Arena in San Juan.

Cebuana Lhuillier-Pera Padala will likewise aim to extend its winning streak against San Miguel-Magnolia at 12 noon, while Burger King and Dazz 'Sang Patak will try to end their winless spells at 2 p.m.

Reliable Jason Castro surprisingly played off-form as Batang Pier outclassed Burger King, 83-79, last Thursday.

But Alonzo, a bruiser from Adamson University, picked up the slack to finish with a double-double performance: 18 points, 15 rebounds.

In the curtain-raiser, Cebuana Lhuillier-Pera Padala will similarly bank on its big men when it shoots for a third straight victory against error-prone San Miguel-Magnolia.

"It's a challenge to have a three-game winning streak, but I'm proud of the way the boys have been playing," said Moneymen coach Luigi Trillo.

The Moneymen claimed solo second with Ken Bono, Alfie Grijaldo, Doug Kramer and Macky Escalona conspiring for a 72-65 victory against Dazz last Tuesday.

Meanwhile, the league will also treat fans to the Extreme Magic Sing Karaoke Challenge between games. The first two matches will be aired on a delayed basis starting 5 p.m. on Basketball TV, while the nightcap will be shown on the same channel at 7 p.m. tomorrow.

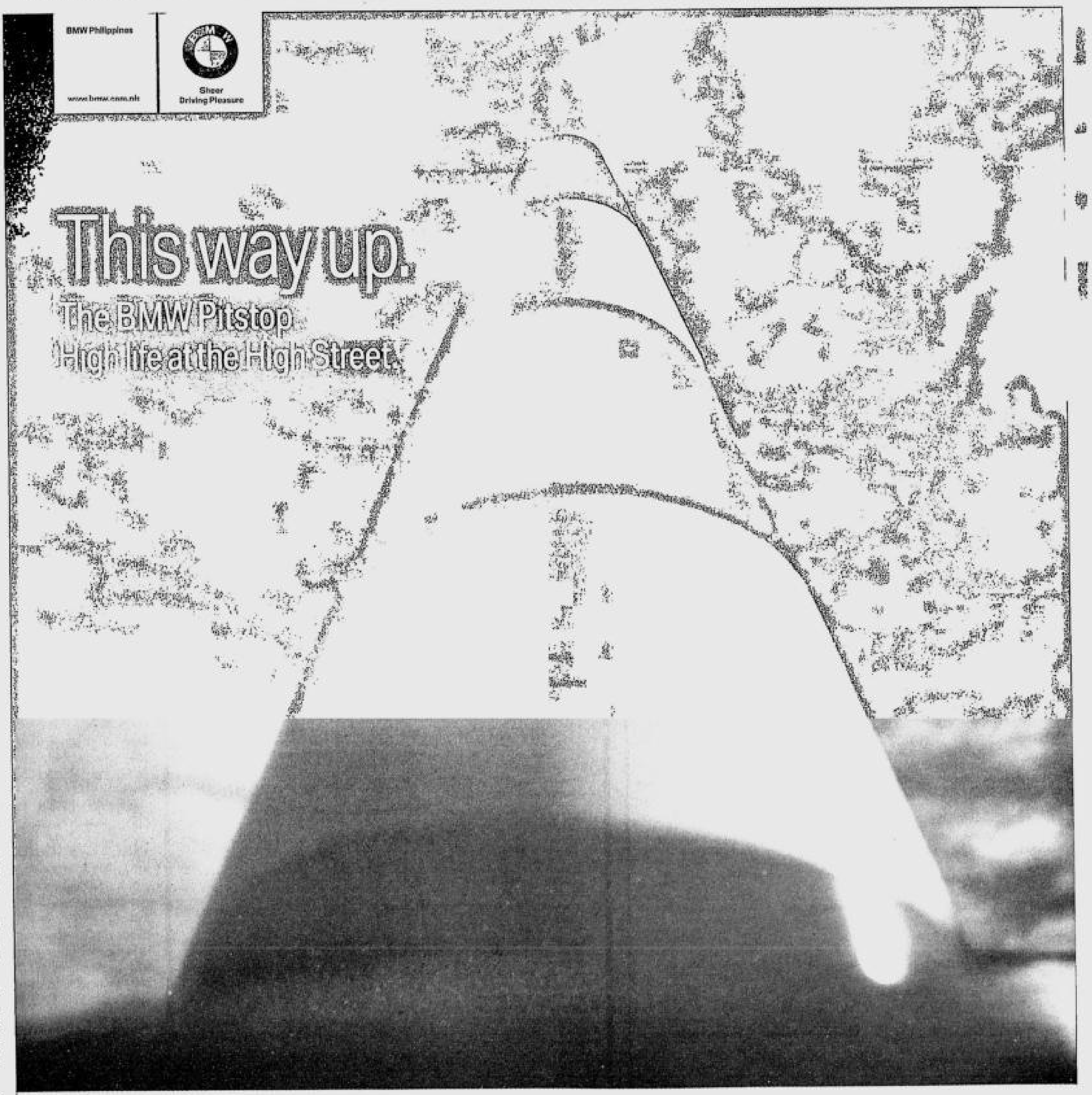
Batang Pier gained the upperhand in its first-round encounter against the Road Kings as Castro buried a buzzer-beating triple for a 73-70 escape.

The Moneymen also nipped the Beverage Masters by surviving a late comeback for a 76-74 decision.

A thrilling first-round face-off also ensued between the Kitchen Specialists and the Whoppers, who pulled off a 101-98 double-overtime victory.

But the Whoppers went on a slide since then as they now try to halt a three-game losing skid.

The Kitchen Specialists, who tend to collapse in the second half, will also aim to get out of a losing rut after six games. *Jasmine W. Payo*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Per DTI-NCR Permit No. 1940 Series of 2007

Letran, NU tear down rivals

GAMES TOMORROW (*The Arena*)
2 p.m. DLSU vs JRU
4 p.m. PCU vs Ateneo
6 p.m. UE vs Letran

THE NATIONAL UNIVERSITY BULLDOGS sure know how to attract attention.

After beating defending NCAA winner San Beda College, the NU Bulldogs picked three-time UAAP champion Ateneo de Manila University Blue Eagles as their next victims, hacking out an 81-63 decision yesterday in the Filoil-Flying V Preseason Invitational Cup at The Arena in San Juan.

In the opening match, Letran evened its record to 2-2 after an 83-74 victory over University of the Philippines, which is still winless in two outings.

Jay Jahnke led three other Bulldogs who scored in double figures, sinking a game-high 20 markers while getting support from Edwin Asoro who made 17, Jonathan Fernandez who added 16 and Mike Salbado who had 11 points.

From a 33-32 halftime lead, Jahnke had a 10-point explosion in the third canto to help the Bulldogs erect a 55-44 advantage entering the payoff quarter.

The Eagles, who fell to 1-4, got 16 points from Jobe Nkomakolem and 12 markers each from Christopher Sumalinog and Martin Quimson.

NU dropped its first match, 61-57, against Jose Rizal University on April 29, but rebounded with an 84-76 trouncing of San Beda three days later.

Ateneo had so far lost to arch rival De La Salle, Mapua and Letran while its lone win came at the expense of 2006 UAAP finals tormentor University of Sto. Tomas.

The Knights were somewhat tentative during the first period, trailing 12-18 prompting coach Louie Alas to lash out at his players.

"They were too excited at first. I had to remind them this is a team game, they shouldn't be making moves without looking at our set plays," Alas said.

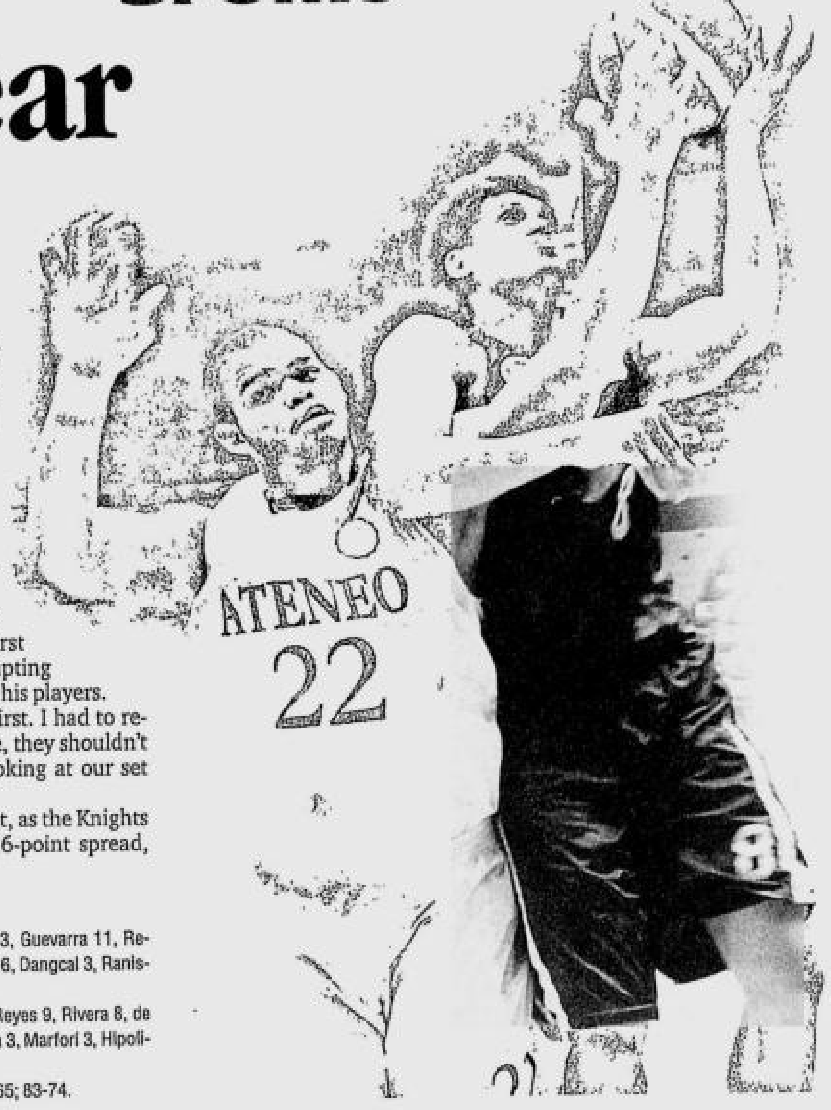
Alas' reprimand hit its target, as the Knights ended the first half with a 16-point spread, 54-38.

The scores:

LETRAN 83—Melegrito 15, Daa 13, Guevarra 11, Refosar 10, Faundo 10, Quinday 9, Jazul 6, Dangcal 3, Ranises 2, Cabonce 2, del Rosario 2.

UP 74—Serios 20, Agbayani 15, Reyes 9, Rivera 8, de Asis 4, Epres 3, Rosales 3, del Victoria 3, Marfori 3, Hipolito 2, Gamboa 2.

Quarterscores: 12-18; 54-38; 73-65; 83-74.



NATIONAL U'S Edwin Asoro (right) is foiled by Ateneo's Jobe Nkemakolem on his way to the basket during the Filoil-Flying V Preseason Invitational Cup at The Arena in San Juan. NU won 81-63.

AUGUST DELA CRUZ

PSC assures: RP athletes' dorm to rise

By June Navarro

THANKS TO THE PRODDING OF A UNITED States-based philanthropist, the proposed dormitory for Filipino athletes has become a priority for the Philippine Sports Commission.

PSC chair William "Butch" Ramirez yesterday said the project to house at least 500 athletes in a hotel-type dormitory inside the Rizal Memorial Sports Complex would definitely materialize.

Reason: The benefactor himself has been pushing for its construction.

Ramirez said the four-storey edifice, which will sit on an 800-square meter lot adjacent to the Rizal Memorial Tennis Center, would be bankrolled by the Federation of Philippine American Chamber of Commerce.

He stressed that the Philippines would not shell out a single centavo for the project.

Estimated to cost P70 million, the dormitory was originally conceptualized by former PSC chair Eric Buhain but was shelved after Malacañang appointed him as Games and Amusements Board chair.

"As benefactor, FPACC is really interested on this project," Ramirez said.

The PSC chief said the Los Angeles-based FPACC has committed to shoulder the expenses through its president Dr. Yolanda Stern.

The deal will be finalized by July.

The Philippine Olympic Committee, for its part, also plans to build an athletes' dormitory within the sports complex which the POC has envisioned at the Clark Air Base.

Republic of the Philippines
DEPARTMENT OF LABOR AND EMPLOYMENT
National Capital Region
DY Int'l Bldg., 1650 San Marcelino
cor. General Malvar St., Malate, Manila

NOTICE OF FILING OF APPLICATION/S FOR ALIEN EMPLOYMENT PERMIT/S (AEP/S)

Notice is hereby given that the following companies/employers have filed with this Regional Office application/s for Alien Employment Permit/s:

Name and address of Company/Employer	Name of Foreign National	Position
AMBERGRIS SOLUTIONS PHILIPPINES, INC. 2/F Discovery Center, 25 ADB Ave., Ortigas Ctr. Pasig City	Phil Mendones Ejanda	Customer Interaction Associate
HUAWEI TECHNOLOGIES PHILIPPINES INC. 53/F PBCom Tower, Ayala Ave., Makati City	Qianli Ma	Turnkey Contractor Manager
AAM-PHIL NATURAL RESOURCES EXPLORATION AND DEVELOPMENT CORPORATION Suite 601-A S&L Bldg., 1500 Roxas Blvd., Ermita, Manila	Gonghai Zhang	Treasury Head
AAM-PHIL NATURAL RESOURCES EXPLORATION AND DEVELOPMENT CORPORATION Suite 601-A S&L Bldg., 1500 Roxas Blvd., Ermita, Manila	Changbing Wang	Asst. Project Inspector
HUAWEI TECHNOLOGIES PHILIPPINES INC. 53/F PBCom Tower, Ayala Ave., Makati City	Bing Liu	Product Manager
IT KOR INC. 1715 J. Bocobo St., Malate, Manila	Byungsun Kim	Sales Manager
GEOTOUR CORP. 4/F Core Town Bldg., 2282 EDSA Extension cor. P. Celle St., Pasay City	Young Mi An	Manager
TOUR WANNABE, INC. 2/F Financial Center Bldg., D. Macapagal Avenue, Pasay City	Suk Ho Jeung	Assistant Marketing Manager
INDO'S TRAVEL & TOURS Unit A1 Casa Catalina Bldg., # 635 Gen. Malvar St., Malate Manila	Jung Sub Park	Operation Manager
HAUZEN TOUR & TRAVEL CORP. 2282 Coretown Bldg., P. Celles St. cor. Edsa Ext., Pasay City	Sun Joo Wang	Assistant Finance Manager
WORLD WIDE POWER COMMUNITY INC. 20 A # 22 Wynsum Corp. Plaza, Emerald Ave. Pasig City	Jung Jae Kim	Assistant Operation Manager
WORLD WIDE POWER COMMUNITY INC. 20 A # 22 Wynsum Corp. Plaza, Emerald Ave., Pasig City	Hak Sik Kim	Operation Manager
METRO PHARMA PHILIPPINES, INC. Metro Pharma Bldg., 600 Shaw Blvd., Pasig City	Joydeep Mukerji	Business Development Manager
MANPOWER OUTSOURCING SERVICES INC. 19/F PBCom Tower, 6795 Ayala Avenue, Makati City	Wissam Nizar Sinno	Support Engineer-Arabic
HENLU GENERAL MERCHANDISE STL 2C-9, 7 Juan Luna Plaza, Juan Luna St., Binondo, Manila	Zhenhe Huang	Sales Consultant
EDSA SHANGRI-LA HOTEL & RESORT, INC. 1 Garden Way, Ortigas Center, Mandaluyong City	Markus Christ	EAM/c F&B
MAKATI SHANGRI-LA HOTEL & RESORT, INC. Cor. Ayala and Makati Avenues, Makati City	Masataka Hashimoto	Business Development Manager
EDSA SHANGRI-LA HOTEL & RESORT, INC. 1 Garden Way, Ortigas Center, Mandaluyong City	Nicola Coccia	Executive Sous Chef

If you have any information/objection to the above mentioned application/s please communicate with the Regional Director.

The DOLE conducts free seminar on Labor-Human Relations and Productivity. For more information, please call 339-2013 & 303-5920.

LOURDES M. TRASMONTE
Regional Director

(PDI - May 12, 2007)

Republic of the Philippines
DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION
Meralco Avenue, DepED Complex, Pasig City
BIDS AND AWARDS COMMITTEE
DepED

INVITATION TO APPLY FOR ELIGIBILITY AND TO BID

The Physical Facilities and Schools Engineering Division (PFSED) of the Department of Education (DepED), through its Bids and Awards Committee (BAC), invites prospective bidders to submit Letter of Intent (LOI) apply for eligibility and if found eligible to bid for the hereunder project:

Name of Project : Restoration of Various Heritage Buildings at Teacher's Camp, Baguio City
Location : Teacher's Camp, Baguio City

Package No.	Building	Approved Budget for the Contract (ABC)	Contract Duration (Calendar Days)
1	Allen Hall / Cottages 201, 209 & 212	Php 10,713,233.13	150
2	Abada Hall / Hernandez Hall	10,154,736.68	180
3	Cottages 101, 104, 105 / Guest House No. 6 / Administration Building	8,254,509.63	150
4	Secretary's Cottage and User's Cottages/Superintendents Quarters	13,236,233.61	180
5	Roxas Hall (Additional)	5,891,276.95	150
	TOTAL>>>>>>>>>	Php48,250,000.00	

Bids received that exceed the ABC per package shall be rejected at bid opening. Bidder may bid for any or all of the packages. Late bid shall be rejected.

Prospective bidders should possess a valid PCAB License applicable to the contract, have completed similar civil works (vertical contruction) largest single contract with a value of at least 50% of the ABC being bid, experience or completed contract(s) in restoration of historical or heritage building(s), and key personnel and equipment available for the prosecution of the contract. The BAC will use non-discretionary pass/fail criteria in the Eligibility Check and Examination of Bids. The BAC will conduct post-qualification of the lowest calculated bid.

All particulars relative to Eligibility Statement and Screening, Bid Security, Performance Security, Pre-Bid Conference, Evaluation of Bids, Post-Qualification and Award of Contract shall be governed by the pertinent provisions of R.A. 9184 and its Implementing Rules and Regulation (IRR).

The Schedule of BAC Activities are as follows:

Activities	Schedule
1. Submission of Letter of Intent (LOI) and Application for Eligibility, and Issuance of Eligibility Documents	May 11-24, 2007 8:00 a.m. - 5:00 p.m.
2. Submission/Receipt of Eligibility Requirements	Deadline on May 25, 2007 8:00 a.m. - 5:00 p.m.
3. Opening of Eligibility Requirements	May 28, 2007
4. Notice of Results of Eligibility Check	May 30, 2007
5. Issuance of Bid Documents	Starting on May 31, 2007
6. Pre-bid Conference Venue: Quirino Canteen, Teacher's Camp, Baguio City	June 8, 2007, 10:00 a.m.
7. Receipt and Opening of Bids Venue: Quirino Canteen, Teacher's Camp, Baguio City	June 21, 2007, 10:00 a.m.

The Eligibility Documents shall be available at **Procurement Service, BAC Secretariat, Rm. 508, 5th Floor, Mabini Building, DepED Complex, Meralco Avenue, Pasig City** upon submission of a Letter of Intent (LOI) and payment in cash of a non-refundable amount of **Philippine Pesos Five Hundred and 00/100 only (Php 500.00)**. Prospective bidders shall submit the Eligibility Requirements in a sealed envelope to the BAC through the Procurement Service, BAC Secretariat at the address above. The results of the Eligibility Check may also obtain at the same address.

The BAC will only issue Bidding Documents to bidders declared as eligible to bid upon payment in cash of a non-refundable amount of **Philippine Pesos Five Thousand and 00/00 (Php5,000.00)** and a non-refundable amount of **Philippine Pesos One Thousand and 00/100 only (Php1,000.00)** for the Blue Print Copy of Plan per package. The BAC Secretariat could be reached through Tel. Nos. (02) 633-9343 or Fax No. (02) 636-6543. Information is also available at http://www.deped.gov.ph or www.procurementservice.org

The Purchaser assumes no responsibility whatsoever to compensate or indemnify bidders for any expense incurred in the preparation of the bid. Likewise, the Purchaser reserves the right to accept or reject any Bid, and to annul the bidding process and reject all Bids at any time prior to contract award, without thereby incurring any liability to the affected bidder or bidders.

(Sgd.) TEODOSIO C. SANGIL, JR.
Undersecretary and BAC Chairperson

(PDI—May 12, 2007)

SOUTH COTABATO II ELECTRIC COOPERATIVE, INC.
(SOCOTECO II)

INVITATION TO PRE-QUALIFY AND TO BID

The South Cotabato II Electric Cooperative, Inc. (SOCOTECO II) is inviting all interested bidders to Pre-qualify and to Bid for the following:

1. STEEL POLE - 25' (25FT.), 30' (30FT.), 35' (35FT), 40' (40FT.)

SPECIFICATION OF STEEL POLE

Height (FT.)	Thickness (MM.)	Butt Diameter (MM.)	Tip Diameter (MM.)	Design Load (KG.)	Yield Stress (MPA)	Zinc Coating (MICRONS)
25	2.50	152	120	300	345	86
30	3.00	226	127	500	345	86
35	3.00	248	127	500	345	86
40	3.00	317	127	500	345	86

2. LINE FAULT INDICATOR
(To indicate Line Fault for Feeder)
3. Metering Point Fabrication with complete accessories
4. SCADA - 1 SET
SPECIFICATIONS
Supply of all devices, equipment, accessories, hardware and software for the SCADA/AUTOMATION Scheme initially for four (4) Substation and provision for possible integration of other substation in the Future.
To provide solutions on integrating all existing SCADA ready devices such as reclosers and relays communication links, training of personnel, maintenance support and will be responsible for the project implementation and supervision until the system is fully functional.
5. SWITCHGEAR ASSEMBLY
SPECIFICATIONS FOR SWITCHGEAR ASSEMBLY
Supply of 2 sets of 15KV Switchgear Assembly, compact Type 60Hz with 4 x 1,200 Amp. Vacuum Circuit Breaker/Set, Compre Microprocessor based Protection Relays with Universal Communication Protocol (DNP 3.0, Modbus) of US or European Manufacturer.
Including the Supply of the XLPE cables, terminal connectors, termination kits, control house renovation, labor on mounting and installation, personnel training on tending, maintenance and troubleshooting and other necessary accessories.
(NOTE): Existing 2 x 20 mva at different locations with Automatic Circuit Reclosers as Feeder protection.)

To be qualified Bidder must have fully complied with the following:
Accreditation Requirements
A. Company Profile
B. Business Registration
C. BIR/Vat Certificate of Registration
D. Business Permit
E. Latest Income Tax Return (ITR)
F. List of Clients for a period of three (3) years

SUBMISSION TO THE ACCREDITATION COMMITTEE
Bid and Award Chairperson - VIRGILIO B. OCTAVIO

DEADLINE FOR SUBMISSION OF REQUIREMENTS - MAY 22, 2007

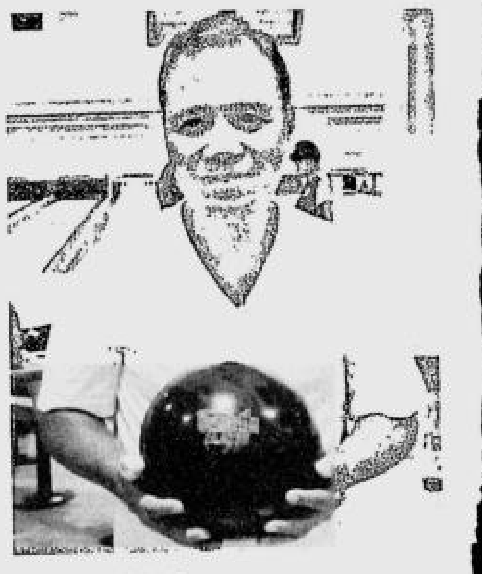
(Sgd.) VIRGILIO B. OCTAVIO
BAC CHAIRPERSON

Noted by:
(Sgd.) Engr. Rodolfo G. Ocat
General Manager

SOUTH COTABATO II ELECTRIC COOPERATIVE, INC.
JOSE CATOLICO SR. AVE., LAGAO, GEN. SANTOS CITY
TEL. NO. 552-4313, 552-4271; FAX NO. 552-4856;
E-MAIL: http: // Socoteco 2.com/index.php

(PDI—May 12 & 13, 2007)

SPORTSWATCH



PERFECT GAME **Bernie Barrientos of the Sta. Lucia East Tenpin Bowling Association (Sletba) and a member of the Sta. Lucia East Senior Bowlers Club scored his first perfect game on May 2, 2007, at the Sta. Lucia Grand Mall Bowling Center in Cainta, Rizal. Barrientos, 64, used a 14-pound Dynothane Vendetta Maxx.**

Petron backs 5th Driver Challenge

THE SEARCH FOR THE NEXT CAR RACING SUPERSTAR MOVES UP TO A higher level as the Tuason Racing School stages the 5th season of the C! Top Driver Challenge slated May 18 at the Time Zone, Glorietta 4. The overall champion of this series will win a racing scholarship plus a chance to join circuit racing competitions. Previous Top Driver champions include Jeff Borja, Vic Nodalo and Joward Policarpio. The first of the elimination rounds will be a three-day Video Game Challenge set May 18-20. The karting Challenge segment will be held at the Manila Speedzone on June 30.

P3-M poker prize pot lures foreign bidders

FOREIGN POKER PLAYERS GETTING READY FOR PACIFIC POKER PALACE'S $3-million No Limit Texas Hold 'Em tournament in September at the Airport Casino Filipino in Parañaque City have started to arrive to see action in the event's lucrative preliminaries. A guaranteed prize of P1 million each is at stake in two tournaments on May 12 and 26 this month at the airport venue. Ben dela Cruz of Pacific Poker Palace said entry fee is P2,000 and the buy-in is P20,000. The September tournament is being billed as Asia's biggest ever poker event. Prizes of P250,000 and P100,000 are also up for grabs in tournaments on May 5 and 19, respectively, also at the airport casino.

Derby big guns fight it out in NCA tilt

THE COUNTRY'S FINEST COCKFIGHTERS AND A SPRINKLING OF FOREIGN bidders are seeing action in the year's biggest derby organized by the National Cockers' Association on Tuesday at the Pasay City cockpit. Prominent sportsmen Efren Canlas, Mario Villamor, Jun Jingco, Jet Fernando, the Madlangbayan Brothers, and Raymond Velayo will host the Sagupaan Complexor-sponsored event. Richard Kelly of Alabama, the Milky Way Group of Bacolod, Vice Mayor Lito Orillaza and George Araneta are heavy favorites to win the derby. Also in the field are NCA stalwarts Rep. Iggy Arroyo, Gov. Ito Ynares, Patrick Antonio, Rey Briones, Ric de Guzman, Michael Co, Lando Celebre, JV Magsaysay, Ruel Ricafort, Edgar Santos, chair Rudy Albano, Pico Berin, Sec. Ronnie Puno, Manny Pacquiao, Jerry Ramos, Tony Lasalla, Benjie Lim, Eric dela Rosa, Bebot Villar, Art Sevilla, Edwin Santos, Jun Santiago, Essie Mallillin, Edwin Abella, Boy Jiao and Manny Santos.

Nat'l Rambulan champion known today

AFTER TWO AND A HALF MONTHS OF INTENSE BATTLES STAGED IN 24 DIFFerent cockpits around the country, the grand champion of the first-ever National Rambulan 8-Cock Derby will finally be known today at San Juan Coliseum. The first of 114 fights starts at 11 a.m. with Thunderbird Platinum and Sagupaan Complexor 3000 as sponsors. Aside from bagging a hefty prize, the champion will also hold the distinction of topping a record field of 978 entries. With a leading six wins each going into today's finals are Raymond Velayo, Dennis Pineda, Peping Ricafort, Vince Perea, Louie Cua, Rene Ongpin, Padin, Sammy Uy, Boy Palban, Conrado Nicart, Enjie Caya, Sam Mendoza, Allan Siaco, E. Abella and Rio Salceda.

PCAP 5-cocker kicks off at Makati Coliseum

THE INTERESTING SHOWDOWN AMONG TOP COCKERS RESUMES TODAY VIA the Pinoy Cockers Association of the Philippines (PCAP) 5-Cock Derby series at the Makati Coliseum. The 70-fight program sponsored by B-Meg Derby Ace and Gran Matador begins at 5 p.m. The Firebird Jimafer BJ joint entry of hotelier Biboy Enriquez, Jet Fernando and Paul Dominguez topped the PCAP's ninth leg derby last Monday. Meanwhile, confirmed entries in the upcoming Makati Invitational 8-Cock Derby rose to 75 yesterday. Hosts Lito Orillaza, Rudy Salud and William Co of WTJ Sports and Amusement Corp. expects no less than 100 local and international entries to vie in the P3-million event slated May 28, 30 and June 1.

Tough Las Piñas hackfight gets going

UPCOMING COCKERS AND DERBY REGULARS FROM CAVITE, LAGUNA AND Metro Manila clash anew tonight in a tough 3-cock derby at the Las Piñas Coliseum. The first of more than 50 fights starts at 7 p.m. To be hosted by Romy Millo, today's battles dangle a cash prize of P300,000 for an entry fee of P5,500. Official entries must be submitted no later than 2 p.m. Last Saturday, two entries—Kidlat of Fisca Garcia and Queen Ira of Romy Ira—topped the venue's special 3-cock event. Up next at LPC is the weekly Sunday Hackfight Concierto which unfolds at 8 a.m. tomorrow. Coliseum manager Alex Tobias said the first 20 winners will receive P1,000 each.

Bayron, Rodriguez pace Sabah Am Open

SABAH—JAY BAYRON WAVERED COMING IN and settled for a two-under-par 70 but still opened up a three-stroke lead over Malaysian Woo Soo Kong while Junior World champion Cyna Rodriguez paced the ladies side with a 71 at the start of the Sabah Amateur Open at the Sabah Golf Club here.

Bayron, 27, went three under in the back nine with birdies on Nos. 10, 15 and 18 of the par-72 layout, the frontside of his game yesterday.

But the winner of the National Amateurs and the DHL Open dropped a stroke on the short par-4 No. 1 on the way to a 33-37 card.

That was three shots up on Woo, who failed to use his familiarity with the layout and groped for form with a 73.

Filipinos Miko Alejandro and Ferdie Aunzo, the two other members of the ICTSI golf squad on a three-week swing in Malaysia, took the next two spots with 74 and 75, respectively.

Rodriguez, priming up for her defense of the crown in San Diego, California, made back-to-back birdies from No. 4 but bogeyed the tough No. 11 and the par-5 14th. She holed out with a birdie for a 34-37 round and a one-shot lead over Ictsi teammate Anya Tanpinco (35-37).

Dottie Ardina, also a reigning Junior World champion and winner of the recent DHL Open, struggled with a three-over 75 to be in third spot while Maridhel dela Paz had 75 and Rokia Daud and Chihiro Ikeda both made 76s.

Over in Kuching, Malaysia, Anthony Fernando matched par 72 to trail HJ Sieta of Brunei by one stroke after the first round of the Naim Sarawak Masters at the Kelab Golf Sarawak course.

Fernando, joint fourth in the recent DHL Open in Canlubang, mixed two birdies with as many bogeys to open his bid in the 54-hole tournament with a 36-36 card.

Sieta came through with a fine start, a one-under par 71, to show the way in the tournament which lured 128 players.

Michael Bibat, the Doha Asian Games bronze medalist, carded a two-over 74 and stood in third place while teammate Dante Becierra and Gene Bondoc made identical 79s and Gino Bunyi groped for form with an 80.

Unbeaten Guzman No. 1 on list of Pacquiao foes

By Roy Luarca

GEN. SANTOS CITY—LIST DOMINICAN Joan Guzman No. 1 on Manny Pacquiao's roster of likely opponents.

Bob Arum, chief honcho of Top Rank which is promoting Pacquiao's fights, revealed this yesterday in an interview at the East Asia Royale Hotel here.

Guzman, the WBO super featherweight champ, ranks high in the fight card—likely to take place in late September or early October in the United States—if only because there have been exploratory talks with Sycuan Promotions, which manages the unbeaten Guzman.

Arum is in the country to provide moral support for Pacquiao's congressional bid in the first district of South Cotabato.

Others being considered, in Arum's order of preference, are: knockout king Edwin Valero, the WBA super featherweight titlist; Mexican great Marco Antonio Barrera and Mexican Humberto Soto, who is slated to fight Bobby Pacquiao, Manny's younger brother on June 8 in New York.

TOP RANK head Bob Arum strikes a pose with Manny Pacquiao. INQUIRER PHOTO

WBC super featherweight titlist Juan Manuel Marquez, despite his unaninous decision victory over Barrera in March, is low on the list at No. 5.

Arum said a Pacquiao-Marquez fight isn't economically feasible as the Mexican is demanding a lot of money because "he has the belt."

The 74-year-old Arum shrugged off Marquez's demand saying "he (Marquez) has no fan base at all."

Marquez is best remembered for surviving three first round knockdowns and forging a draw with Pacquiao in May 2004 at MGM Grand in Las Vegas.

The Tokyo-based Valero, who has stopped all 22 foes, the first 18 in the first round, has expressed willingness to tangle with Pacquiao. Valero's Japanese handler, Akihiko Honda, had initially balked, though, at pitting his ward against the Filipino ring icon within the year.

Pacquiao also wants to take on Valero, whom he said had disposed of only "tricycle drivers."

If the fight pushes through, however, it's likely to be held in Macau as the Venezuelan star is still banned from fighting in the United States for medical reasons.

Arum bared that a new arena at the Venetian in Macau, which can accommodate up to 17,000 fans, would be ready to stage the fight by September.

For Barrera to bolster his bid for a rematch with Pacquiao, Arum said the future Hall of Famer needs to present proof that he no longer has a contract with the Golden Boy Promotions of Oscar De La Hoya.

Barrera was halted by Pacquiao in the 11th round in San Antonio, Texas, in November 2003.

As for Soto, he would need to prove his worth against Bobby Pacquiao first, according to Arum.

WOMENS ORGANIZATION
QUALITY FLOORING
VICTORIOUS: Trinity coach Mahlen Dupalco (holding trophy) and her charges celebrate their championship in the recent Mighty Filter MBT Women's Cup basketball tournament at the Metro gym in Mandaluyong City. The only thorn among the roses is Jean Alabanza, the sponsor firm's sports director.

Letran pulls off twin win in Nike caging

LETRAN COLLEGE SCORED similar easy victories the other day in the men's and juniors divisions of the 2007 Nike Summer League basketball tournament at the FEU gym on R. Papa Street, Manila.

The Knights downed erstwhile co-leader Adamson Falcons, 79-62, for their fourth straight win in Group D, while the Squires downed the Olivarez College cagers, 82-60, to sweep Group A.

Veteran point-guard RJ Razul topscored with 14 points for the squad of coach Louie Alas.

Rhoel Hugnatan paced the Falcons with 18 points.

The Squires, on the other hand, rode on Kevin Alas' 24 points.

In the other games, San Sebastian College subdued Emilio Aguinaldo College, 90-85; and Mapua Institute of Technology nipped College of Saint Benilde, 80-77.

The victory was the third in four outings for the Stags in Group C.

AN OPEN LETTER TO THE NATIONAL GOVERNMENT OFFICIALS AND LEGISLATORS OF THE PHILIPPINES AND TO ALL SENATORIAL AND PARTYLIST CANDIDATES OF THE 2007 ELECTION

We, undersigned churches, NGOs and organizations of migrant workers in Hong Kong declare our continuing opposition to the Guidelines on the Deployment of Filipino Household Service Workers of the Philippine Overseas Employment Administration (POEA).

We believe that:

1. The core issue of additional fees to OFWs - be it as payment for the training, assessment or portfolio assessment - remains unanswered and unaddressed.

Additional fees for new OFWs and also for current OFWs - this is the core of our opposition to the POEA guidelines. This is the essential issue that the exemptions package also did not address. In the first place, the exemption scheme is but a ruse to assuage the indignant OFWs. Moreso, what the exemptions aim is to produce generations of OFWs, who will be used to paying more fees and have accepted the training and assessment as institutionalized requirements. Thus, the fees can be collected in perpetuity.

OFWs are charged around P18,000.00 for various fees by the government. Including payment to recruiters and other incidental expenses, any prospective OFW has to cough up P80,000.00 to P100,000 or more. With the new guidelines, these expenses are expected to get even bigger.

According to reports from OFWs, training alone costs P10,000.00 - P15,000.00. This excludes the supplies that they need for the training, which they provide for themselves. Moreover, assessment costs P1,100.00. The portfolio assessment that the government has imposed for existing OFWs, after the massive protests and as part of its exemption package, costs P200.00.

The exemptions package given to Hong Kong-based OFWs is unfair to OFWs elsewhere. *It* promotes the value of selfishness. For the government to propagate such an attitude among its own people is unacceptable.

For so long, OFWs have been pushing forward their concern on the huge fee they have to shell out to work abroad. This situation has trapped many OFWs in the vicious debt cycle that leaves them forever struggling to meet even the basic needs of their families. In such a trap, no one gets exempted.

Although the government would have us believe that only the private agents collect the fees resulting from the POEA guidelines, such is neither true nor is it an absolution of the government's culpability. They do get money from the training and assessment process and, more importantly, the government itself issues the guidelines that subject OFWs to more fees.

In the end, the new fees imposed through the new guidelines will only put OFWs - new and current - in an even worse situation.

2. The provision of a US$400 minimum wage to domestic workers and the non-collection of placement fees from workers themselves should be implemented but without new fees attached.

We are for the minimum wage increase for it is a right of every worker, especially in countries where Filipino domestic workers receive much less. Moreso, we affirm the prohibition of collecting placement fees from domestic workers, ***which, we believe***, is long overdue.

We are all for these developments, provided that these can be sincerely and effectively implemented by the government.

However, these new policies, packaged with the training and assessment fees, make them meaningless. Because, ***the reality is***, there is no guarantee that the minimum wage increase and 'no placement fee' rules can be implemented. Thus, OFWs are left with nothing but even more fees.

It is, also, quite inconsistent for the government to introduce a "no placement fee" policy. For, in fact, migrant workers have been paying outrageous sums to recruitment agencies that are in excess of the legal amount long before and are not issued corresponding receipts. This situation is still not effectively addressed.

If the motive of the government is sincere in providing service and protection to OFWs, then, it should not impose additional financial burden to the OFWs.

The assumption that better trained domestic workers will be lesser prone to abuse or will receive higher salary is baseless. It is, also, unjust as it puts the blame of numerous previous abuses on the shoulders of the victims themselves because they are not 'better trained'.

It is outrageous that the government promises services and protection to OFWs but always with a price tag. Our OFWs deserve better.

For distressed and abused domestic workers, what they need are free, efficient and concrete protection mechanisms from the government and not additional burdens.

3. The rationale behind the minimum age requirement of 23 years old is absurd and the concern for altenative jobs for those who are younger is not dealt with.

The government thinks that age has something to do with experiences of abuses in the countries of destination. But according to our experience, such is not the case. In fact, in the congressional hearings called by the Committee on Overseas Filipino Workers, the POEA and DoLE officials were not able to give satisfactory answers on the advantages of the minimum age requirement. ***The root of the matter is, not age nor the lack of training, but the evil of prejudice, discrimination and unjust working condtions.***

Additionally, what jobs are available in the Philippines for those of working age but less than 23 years old? Will the government feed their families?

With these major concerns, we maintain our call to scrap the POEA guidelines. What we demand the government to do is to:

1. Scrap the whole POEA guidelines.
2. Issue the minimum wage and 'no placement fee' policies in separate guidelines and institute sufficient mechanisms for the implementation of these provisions.
3. Conduct sufficient and widespread education among Filipino domestic workers with regard to their rights in their respective host countries, their rights under various international conventions the host countries should adhere to, and their rights as OFWs.
4. Improve and make efficient the government's support programs, especially for distressed OFWs. Sufficient funding must be allocated for these services- that should not come from the pockets of OFWs themselves.
5. Consult representatives of different migrant workers organizations and communities abroad for future legislation and policies affecting the lives of OFWs and their families.

With these:

We implore our future senators and congressmen to take up this concern and work for its abolition.

We call on to our fellow migrant workers to heighten the opposition against the guidelines.

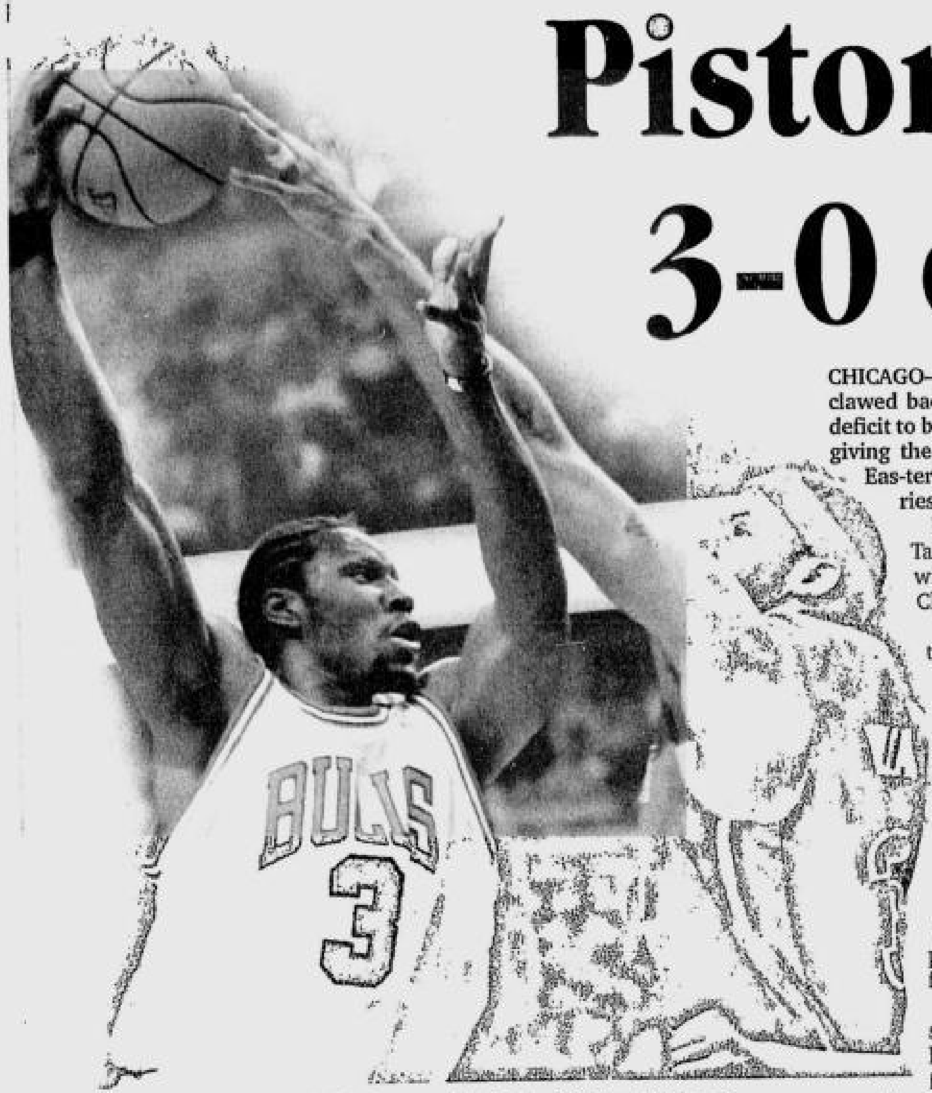
We beg our families and compatriots in the Philippines to participate in the campaign to scrap the POEA guidelines.

For the sake of those we call as the country's new heroes, we must all act.

Signed by: Alay Kapwa Catholic Group; Abra Tinguian Ilocano Society (ATIS) [20 associations]; Alimudian Iloilo Workers Association; Apostleship of Prayer; Asia Pacific Mission for Migrants (APMM); Association of Filipino Women Migrant Workers (FILWOM); Balikatan sa Kaunlaran (BSK-Kowloon/New Territories); BANAUE Organization; Bangon Pilipinas Movement; Bataan Migrant Association; Bayanihan Volunteers; Bethune House Migrant Women's Refuge; Bileg Ti Ilocano; Borongan Hong Kong Workers Association; Buguias Migrant Workers Organization; Cavite, Laguna, Batangas, Rizal, and Quezon (CALABARZON); Consolidated Filipino Community Brigade; Cordillera Alliance in Hong Kong (CORALL-HK) [16 associations]; D' Alabayanos Association; Dayuhang Mangagawa; ECSMEN Association; Edil's Migrant Dance Club; Federation of Bohol Philippines International Hong Kong; Filguys Association in Hong Kong; Filipino Migrant Workers' Union (FMWU) [4 chapters]; Filipino Nurses Association (FNA-HK); FRIENDS (KAJEM); Gabriela Women's Party Hong Kong; Grace of Jesus Fellowship (HK); Helpers of Islam Group; Hingyon Association; Ifugao Association; Iglesia Filipina Independiente (IFI) Hong Kong Mission Council; Integrated Midwives Association of the Philippines - Hong Kong; International Christian Assembly - Filipino Ministry (HK); Jesus Alive Forevermone Ministries (HK); Jesus is Lord (JIL-HK); Kabacan Overseas Workers Association (KABOWA); Kabayan Benguet Organization; Kakailian Association; Kalinga Apayao Workers Association (KAPWA-HK); Kennon Road Overseas Workers Association; Kidapawan Migrant Association; La Paz Association; La Trinidad Valley Organization; Lagawe Organization; League of Filipino Midwives (LOFM); Lifeway Full Gospel Church (HK); Mayoyao Association (Ifugao); Methodist Church - Filipino Fellowship (HK); Migrante Naguilian Chapter; Migrante Sectoral Party - Hong Kong; Mission for Migrants Workers (MFMW); Muslim Filipino Association; Nabuenos Association Hong Kong Chapter; New Beginnings Christian Fellowship (HK); Novo Ecijano Association; Oriental Mindoro Hong Kong Society; Palawan Migrant Association Hong Kong; Pangasinan Alliance for Rapid Development Society (PARDS); Pangasinan Solid Group International; Paracelis Natonin Barlig Association (PANABA); Passi Iloilo Association; Philippine Guardian Brotherhood Incorporated HK SAR Chapter; Platinum Plan Holders Organization Hong Kong; Sagay Associtlon; Salvation Army - Filipino Ministry (HK); San Roque Overseas Workers Association; Scenic Villa Group; Simbayanan-KAMMPI; St. Anne Church Filipino Community; St. John's Filipino Fellowship; St. Joseph The Workers Group; St. Mathew the Apostles Parish Filipino Community; St. Mathew's Filipino Catholic Group (HK); Sts. Peter and Paul Center - Yuen Long; United Filipinos in Hong Kong (UNIFIL-MIGRANTE-HK) [25 associations]; United Pangasinan Hong Kong (UPHK) [10 associations]

ADVT

Pistons make it 3-0 over Bulls



CHICAGO Bulls' Ben Wallace (left) shoots against Detroit Pistons' Rasheed Wallace. The Pistons are one win away from the Eastern Conference finals. AP

CHICAGO—DETROIT'S VETERAN team clawed back from a 16-point halftime deficit to beat the Chicago Bulls, 81-74, giving the Pistons a 3-0 lead in their Eas-tern Conference semifinal series on Thursday.

In a scrappy game, forward Tayshaun Prince led the Pistons with 23 points and guard Chauncey Billups added 21.

Detroit coach Flip Saunders termed Prince a quiet achiever.

"He scored a silent 23 points and 11 rebounds, which is what he does."

"(He) was the key to what we did. He made big shots to get our momentum going," Saunders said.

Game 4 of the best-of-seven series is in Chicago on Sunday. No team has won an NBA playoff series after losing the first three games.

"We know we have to do something extraordinary from here. Win the next game, and from then anything can happen," said Chicago coach Scott Skiles.

Luol Deng topscored with 21 points for the home team and Ben Gordon contributed 18.

For the game Chicago shot less than 34 percent from the field.

"We missed somewhere between 18 and 25 open shots that you have to get," Skiles said. "We got a bit tentative in the second half, and they're good enough that they're going to feed on it."

Looking for a repeat of their 2004 NBA championship, the Pistons have won seven straight playoff games after sweeping Orlando in the first round. They now have' an 18-14 playoff record against Chicago.

Detroit's long playoff experience paid off. The team did not flinch after a dismal second quarter of 22-percent shooting from the field.

At that point, the sellout crowd at Chicago's United Center looked set to help lift the home team to victory after two lopsided losses on Detroit's home court.

The Motown team shot 59 percent from the field in the third quarter, inclu-ding three-point baskets from Billups and Rasheed Wallace in the final minute. Detroit went ahead for good with some seven minutes to go.

Reuters

Sabbatini, Mickelson share lead at TPC

PONTE VEDRA BEACH, FLORIDA—Rory Sabbatini and Phil overcame wind strong enough to knock branches from palm trees and both shot 5-under 67s Thursday to share the first-round lead at The Players Championship.

With gusts reaching 63 kph (39 mph), Tiger Woods was without a birdie for the first time in four years.

"I think he's more beatable than ever," Sabbatini, who has three US PGA Tour victories and a runner-up finish (with Woods) at the Masters last month, said.

Woods had only four good looks at birdie, three-putted three times and had to save par from 90 feet behind the green on his final hole for a 3-over 75, matching his highest score at The Players.

It was his first round without a birdie since the opening round of the 2003 Masters.

"The greens are a little bit tricky to read," Woods said. "Different grain out there than we're used to, and I had a tougher time than the guys at the top of the board."

Mickelson birdied the first two holes and saved par from an awkward slope around the seventh green to join Sabbatini at 67.

Chris DiMarco, winless in five years and now coping with a sore shoulder, shot 68 for his best round of the year. Peter Lonard was 30-under.

Only 16 players broke par, and Retief Goosen had the only bogey-free round.

The famed par-3 island green 17th played extremely tough, with 50 balls landing in the water. It broke the single-round tournament record of 45 set in 2000.

Woods three-putted No. 16 for par, three-putted from the front of the green on No. 4 for bogey and added another three-putt bogey on No. 8.

"I had three three-putts today, and consequently 3-over par," Woods said. "Just got to make a few more putts." *AP*

Rematch with Oscar may stall Floyd retirement

NEW YORK—RETIREMENT BY DEFINITION is final. Floyd Mayweather Jr. is taking a vacation. The unofficial kilo-for-kilo king said before his 12-round, split-decision victory over Oscar De La Hoya on Saturday that he would quit for good afterward. But he hedged during a whirlwind media blitz in New York on Thursday that he's waiting for De La Hoya to call for a rematch. "We had a good fight," Mayweather said, chomping on a sandwich. "I think that number two would be even better, because we can fight toe-to-toe. And I really have nothing else to prove

AP

What's bugging Federer?

ROME—ROGER FEDERER IS OFFICIALly in a slump.

After losing to Guillermo Canas twice and Rafael Nadal in his previous three tournaments, Federer hit a new low Thursday with a loss to an Italian wild card.

Filippo Volandri beat the top-ranked Swiss, 6-2, 6-4, in the third round of the Rome Masters, extending Federer's title drought to four straight tournaments.

It's the worst stretch of Federer's career since ascending to No. 1 in February 2004.

"I don't know what's wrong. I have to analyze it myself," Federer said. "I just couldn't get my teeth into the match at all."

Rome is a key clay-court warmup for the French Open, which begins May 27, and Roland Garros is the only Grand Slam that Federer hasn't won.

Two-time defending French Open champion Nadal extended his clay-court winning streak to 74 matches with a 6-2, 6-2 win over 15th-seeded Mikhail Youzhny.

AP

FEDERER: Winless in four tournaments AP

Certified Public Accountants to get MBA credits

CPAS IN COMMERCE AND INDUSTRY, PUBlic practice, education, and government can now look forward to obtain an Ateneo MBA degree.

This became a reality with the signing of the Memorandum of Agreement (MOA) between the Philippine Institute of Certified Public Accountants (Picpa) and the Ateneo Graduate School of Business last March 27 at the Rockwell Campus. Signing for Picpa is Dr. Antonio Tecson, chair of the Picpa - Metro Manila Region and for AGSB, Dr. Alfredo Bengzon, dean.

Under the terms of the Memorandum, AGSB has accredited the mini-MBA program being implemented by Picpa for its more than 30,000 members in Metro Manila as advance credit units up to a maximum of 9 units applied as the electives requirements of the MBA program. The Picpa program was reviewed as to its content and methodology and was found to resonate well with AGSB's learning objectives and course content management.

In his short remarks after the signing, Dr. Tecson expressed profuse gratitude for the opportunity of Picpa members to obtain a degree from the Ateneo, which is reputedly the best education of higher learning in the country. In response, Dr. Bengzon emphasized the advantage of the Ateneo MBA whereby practitioner-students meet practitioner-faculty in the classroom that strengthens the learning transaction in both theory and practice. He further said that in the classroom, students and professors are simultaneously teacher and student who leverage on their practical experiences in the workplace.

The participants will be certified as having participated satisfactorily in the Picpa program and obtaining satisfactory grades before the credits can be granted and reviewed by the Registrar. In the conduct of the mini-MBA program, the facilitators will largely come from the AGSB roster of professors for satisfactory compliance with the terms of the agreement.

Two courses of the mini-MBA program have been conducted and held in the APS campus and facilitated by professor Ricardo Palo and Dr. Cesar Mansibang. More than 80 CPA practitioners and managers attended the two programs and a number have shown interest in pursuing their MBA degree via this route.

Picpa is the nationwide organization of more than 100,000 CPAs in the Philippines and is recognized and accredited by the Philippine Board of Accountancy as the sole organization representing the CPA profession. In Metro Manila alone, there are more than 30,000 CPAs who work in industry, public practice, education, and government. There are four chapters in the Metro Manila Region where CPAs are grouped: Northern Metro Manila Chapter, Southern Metro Manila Chapter, Eastern Metro Manila Chapter, and Western Metro Manila Chapter. A number of AGSB's finance and accounting professors are members of the Picpa organization. Topping them is the current chair of the Board of Accountancy, lawyer Eugene Mateo, who teaches Financial Accounting and Managerial Accounting.

Also witnessing the signing ceremony were associate dean Albert Buenviaje and APS registrar Dr. Cesar Mansibang of AGSB, Picpa Southern Metro Manila Chapter president Ms Violeta Josef, and some officers and staff of the organization.

PANASONIC AND ABS-CBN ALL SET FOR HALALAN 2007

Panasonic (Philippines) and ABS-CBN Broadcasting Corporation recently inked its partnership deal for a powerhouse team manning the May 14 election coverage dubbed as Halalan 2007. Panasonic will provide the network with Plasma TV sets and other electronic equipment to ensure first-rate election coverage. Celebrating its strongly founded partnership are (front left) Ellen Suarez, Panasonic marketing manager; Hiroyuki Iwaki, sales and marketing director of Panasonic and ; Chari Villa, ABS-CBN head for news gathering. Witnessing the signing are (standing from left) Milen Sison-de Quiros, president of Full Circle Communications and Cristina Tan, ABS-CBN corporate affairs officer.

HP launches new entry-level server for SMBs

HP UNVEILED RECENTLY ITS NEW HP Proliant ML115 entry-level server at Tropezz Restaurant in Greenbelt 3 with a hundred people in attendance, representing over two dozen major resellers.

For the price and size of a desktop computer, the HP ProLiant ML115 brings adequate networking, file-and-print, shared Internet access, small team e-mail, and LAN infrastructure capability to small and mid-sized businesses (SMBs). Aside from its powerful IT capabilities, the ML115 also features an ergonomic chassis that makes typical server hardware configuration changes simple: it's easy-to-use and easy-to-configure, with off-the-shelf functionality.

Powered by Second-Generation AMD Opteron 1000 series, the HP ProLiant ML115's smaller chassis and quiet operation make it ideal for small office environments, under desks and 'out of the way.'

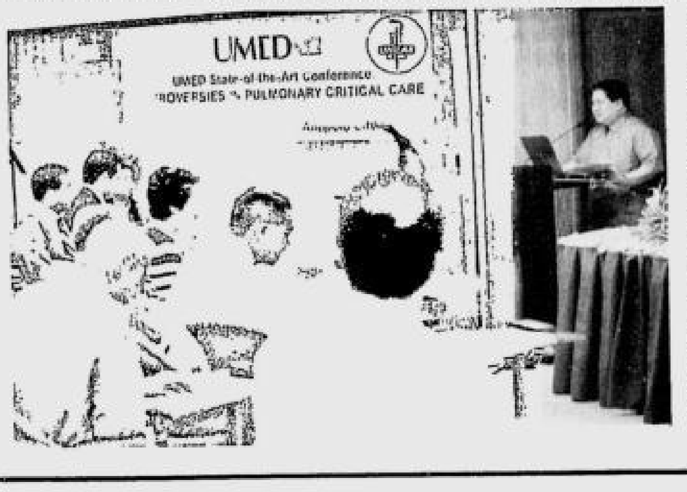
The ML115 is the latest model in HP's strong portfolio of ProLiant servers, which customers of all sizes around the world have come to depend on.

"With three ProLiant servers shipped every minute in the world, the ML115 continues the tradition of excellence of the ProLiant line as a simple, reliable, and affordable server solution for SMB customers," said Veronica Abad Escalante, industry standard servers product manager, HP Philippines. "The HP ProLiant ML115 is a fully capable server with improved networking, business efficiency, and data protection features."

The HP ProLiant ML115 server is priced as low as P46,500 and is available with a special discount offer: any bundle purchase of an ML115 and DAT72 USB tape drive from now until May 30, entitles the customer to an instant P5,000 discount.

HP ProLiant ML115

UNILAB HOLDS MEDICAL CONFAB ON HYPERTENSION, PULMO CARE.



United Laboratories Inc (Unilab), the country's largest and leading pharmaceutical and health-care company, through its Unilab Medical Education and Development (Umed) Unit, recently held a state-of-the-art conference on Hypertension and Pulmonary Critical Care at the Eugenio Lopez Center, Antipolo City. Some 240 medical doctors, majority of whom were pulmonologists and cardiologists from medical institutions nationwide, attended the conference. Unilab launched Umed in 2000 as fulfillment of its commitment to continuing medical education of Filipino medical professionals through state-of-the-art conferences and interactive discussions on the latest developments in medical science. Shown in photo is Umed executive director Dr. Edgardo Ortiz addressing the delegates during the conference.

2007 SEA GAMES

Goma chides TF over outright qualifiers

By June Navarro

ACTOR AND SENATORIAL CANDIDATE Richard Gomez sees something wrong in the criteria set by the national task force for the formation of Team Philippines in the Southeast Asian Games.

Gomez, vice chair of the Philippine Amateur Fencing Association, wants medalists in the previous SEAG to go through the same qualifying tournaments with the other hopefuls before they could clinch a slot in the Philippine team.

Gomez, who captured gold medals in men's epee during the 2003 Vietnam and 2005 Manila Games, said national sports associations (NSAs) should put up a time frame where their athletes could try to make the grade through several tournaments, regardless of the medals they had won before.

"Providing automatic seats for the medalists could frustrate other athletes who are also vying for slots in the SEAG," said Gomez.

The actor-sportsman, the presidential adviser on youth and sports during the term of President Joseph Estrada, stressed that with all the SEAG aspirants on the same footing, the athletes could aim to outclass each other to secure the spot.

"In this setup, sports officials would be assured of fielding the best of the crop when the competition proper comes," said Gomez.

Headed by wushu's Julian Camacho, the task force has provided medalists in the 2005 SEAG and the Doha Asian Games last year outright slots for the biennial games to be held in three satellite venues in Thailand.

"But the final composition of the lineup would still depend on the NSAs," said Camacho during yesterday's Scoop sa Kamayan on Padre Faura Avenue in Manila.

"If they (NSAs) have new athletes in the pool who could beat the medalists, then it's only fitting to provide slots for these promising athletes."

After wrapping up its consultations with the 41 NSAs whose sports will see action in the SEAG, the task force identified 274 athletes who are considered shoo-ins for the country's defense of the SEA Games overall championship.

A total of 178 gold and 91 silver medalists from the SEAG comprise the bulk of the 274 assured athletes along with five Asiad medal-winners from taekwondo, billiards and boxing.

Camacho said the task force might also increase the number of athletes to 348 by including the bronze medalists of the 2005 edition as well.

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Miss Real Estate Philippines 2007

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- Candidate screenings are held every wednesdays and saturdays at Suite 1005, 10th floor, Security Bank Building, 6776 Ayala Ave., Makati, 2pm onwards. Deadline of submission of applications- June 1, 2007

For more information contact the Secretariat at 864-0224 or the Pageant Organizers at 0915-771-3559/ 0906-308-9513

VOTE! Party-list Pacquiao!
PBA
4

ALL FOR SPORTS: Veteran triathlete Sen. Pia Cayetano holds the banner of the Puwersa ng Bayaning Atleta (PBA) Party-list with former pro basketeer Jerry Codiñera (right) and PBA convenor Eric Pineda at the group's recent campaign sortie. Cayetano said Filipino athletes need representation in the Lower House to ensure support from the government. Boxing hero Manny Pacquiao and other notable athletes such as Alvin Patrimonio, Paeng Nepomoceno and Elma Muros are also endorsing the PBA party-list's grassroots program.

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JOB Market

Pichay vows to spearhead development of other sports

PICHAY

SENATORIAL CANDIDATE Prospero "Butch" Pichay is looking forward to helping other sports after having done his share for chess and surfing.

Stressing that sports is a vital component in nation-building, Pichay vowed to pursue more grassroot sports development programs aimed at creating more sports heroes in the near future.

Pichay reiterated the need to tap more young athletes, especially those coming from the provinces, and provide them with ample exposure in world-class sports facilities to harness their God-given talents.

The lawmaker from Surigao del Sur cited the gains he made as head of two of the country's most active national sports associations, the National Chess Federation of the Philippines (NCFP) and Philippine Surfing Federation (PSF).

The Pichay Chess Caravan, launched last year as part of the NCFP's grassroot development program, proved to be a huge success.

Pichay also vowed to raise the level of competition in surfing and to develop more world-class Filipino surfers by hosting several international competitions and promoting an aggressive training program for talented individuals.

He said chess and surfing are only two of the sports he planned to develop once elected.

"With the help of our sports leaders, we can sit down and identify the sports disciplines where we have a great chance of success and then work together to achieve sports excellence," he said.

Home Guaranty Corporation
Office of the President

NOTICE OF SALE

The Home Guaranty Corporation (HGC) is offering for sale, in Cash or Installment, an acquired asset identified as follows:

DESCRIPTION OF THE PROPERTY	LOCATION	TOTAL AREA	MINIMUM BID
A parcel of rawland classified for residential use with TCT No. T-124079	Lot 2 Block 21, Talibeach Resort, Brgy. Balaytique, Nasugbu, Batangas	1,500 sq. m.	P 7,875,000.00

General Guidelines:

1 The sale of the property shall be on an "AS-IS-WHERE-IS" basis.
2. All proposals shall be submitted on or before **May 31, 2007 at 2:00 P.M.**
3. All bidders may offer to buy the property in cash or installment term. Only cash purchase shall be entitled to discounts.
4. Terms of Payment
   4.1 For CASH SALE, the following discount rates apply:
   - 10%, spot cash
   - 6%, if paid in full within 30 days from signing of sales documents
   - 4%, if paid in full within 60 days from signing of sales documents
   - 2%, if paid in full within 90 days from signing of sales documents

   4.2 For INSTALLMENT SALE (discounts are not applicable):
   - 20% minimum down payment
   - Balance payable in equal monthly installments over a maximum term of ten (10) years at twelve (12%) interest per annum.
5. Bidding documents can be secured from the Asset Management and Disposition Group located at the 4th Floor, Jade Building, 335 Sen. Gil Puyat Avenue, Makati City from **May 21 to 25, 2007** upon payment of a non-refundable fee of **FIVE THOUSAND PESOS (P5,000.00).**
6. The opening of the sealed bids should be dropped in the designated drop box located at the 4th Floor Lobby, Jade Building, 335 Sen. Gil Puyat Avenue, Makati City on or before **May 31, 2007 at 2:00 P.M.**
7. All bidders are enjoined to inspect the property before submitting their bids.
8. The award of the sale covering the property shall be based on the **offer determined to be most advantageous to the Corporation.**

For inquiries, please call Jonathan Briones at tel. no. 0917-8327366 or Nemia Mabulay at tel nos. 897-32-86 & 897-32-90 or visit our office at Jade Building, 335 Sen. Gil Puyat Avenue, Makati City.

THE CORPORATION RESERVES THE RIGHT TO REJECT ANY OR ALL OFFERS AND TO WAIVE ANY DEFECTS OR TO ACCEPT SUCH OFFERS AS MAY BE CONSIDERED ADVANTAGEOUS TO THE CORPORATION.

(Sgd) **RAFAEL P. DE LOS SANTOS**
Vice President
Asset Management & Disposition Group

(PDI--May 12 & 19, 2007)

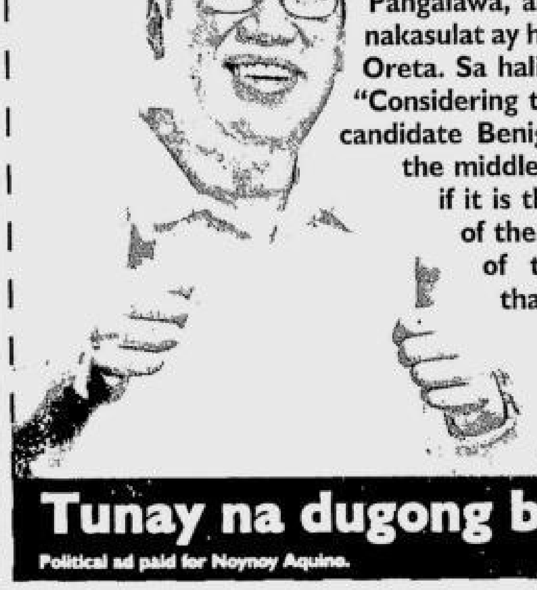
Paki-gupit lang po at dalhin sa inyong Board of Election Inspector.

ANG BOTONG "AQUINO" AY BOTO PARA KAY NOYNOY.

Ayon sa Resolution No. 7900 ng COMELEC, lahat ng boto na "Aquino" lamang ang nakasulat ay bibilangin para kay Benigno "Noynoy" Aquino III.

Una, diskwalipikado sa pagiging kandidato si Theodore "Ted" Aquino: "...pursuant to the Resolution of the Commission No.7842... There being no order from the Supreme Court to restore his name in the certified list of candidates for senator in the May 14, 2007 Elections...".

Pangalawa, ang lahat ng botong "Aquino" lamang ang nakasulat ay hindi bibilangin para kay Ms. Tessie Aquino-Oreta. Sa halip, ito ay mapupunta kay Noynoy Aquino: "Considering that the word "Aquino" is the surname of candidate Benigno Simeon C. Aquino III and is merely the middle name of candidate Teresa Aquino-Oreta, if it is the only word written on the proper space of the ballot, the same shall be counted in favor of the candidate with such family name, that is Benigno Simeon C. Aquino III."



NOYNOY AQUINO
SA SENADO

Tunay na dugong bayani, pusong bayani.

Political ad paid for Noynoy Aquino. G/F, President Tower, Q.C.

Barte reaches last 8

Top seed next faces Lagman; Saraza pulls thru

TOURNAMENT FAVORITE RALPH Kevin Barte made short work of unheralded Jerome Patombron, 6-3, 6-0, yesterday to advance to the quarterfinal round of the boys' 18-and-under division in the 6th annual Toby's Philta Age-Group Championships at the Rizal Memorial Tennis Center.

Barte drew a bye in the first round and routed Arthur Tafalla, 6-3, 6-2, in the second.

The top-seeded Barte forged a last-eight match with Julius Lagman, winner over Gerald Pinili, 6-4, 6-0, at 9 a.m. today in the tournament presented by Prince in cooperation with the Philippine Tennis Association and ATP Futures Foundation.

In the boy's 16 and under, Kim Ivor Saraza beat Giovanni Bilog, 6-1, 6-1, and Alberto Villamor, 7-5, 6-3, in succession to arrange a match with Ernesto Pantua III, who trounced Justine Mendoza, 6-3, 6-2, Kim Polero, 6-1, 6-1.

Sandra Lagman led the winners in the girls' 18-and-under by booting out Erannelle Soriano, 6-0, 6-1.

Joining her in the next round were Sara Jane Lim who hammered Laurence Francisco, 6-1, 6-4; Maria Regina who bested Mar Sotto, 6-2, 6-1; Martina Rivero who overpowered Alyssa Mendoza, 6-2, 6-2; Rachel Lucero who crushed Maria Akita San Andres, 6-0, 6-1; and Enah Baba who routed Kyrie Ann Macias, 6-1, 6-0.

Bianca Tan downed Kathleen Espedido, 8-1, to pace the 12-under unisex section.

Marlon Bernardino, Contributor

FORMER President Fidel V. Ramos hits the ceremonial drive for the tournament celebrating the Trece Martirez, Cavite-based Sherwood Hills' selection as Southeast Asia's No. 1 and the world's 87th-best golf course. ***Story at the bottom***

We'll tell you a story on why the first instant misua from Nissin doesn't taste like instant because we need more than a paragraph to explain to you that we didn't create it instantly.

It all started in 1910, when Momofuko Ando, the inventor of instant ramen and the founder of Nissin was born. Orphaned as a child and sternly raised by his grandfather, Mr. Ando transacted business as a give-and-take affair; that is, if you take too much and give too little in return, you end up killing the other person and losing everything.

Nissin was founded on this win-win principle.

Hunger brought out the inspiration.

In the spring of 1958, post-war Osaka had been reduced to ashes. There was little to eat; food lines stretched around dark street corners. It was here that Mr. Ando saw people dazed with hunger, on their feet for hours, all for a bowl of steaming ramen. In two years' time, he created and distributed the first instant ramen from his backyard.

What started out as neighborhood fare ended up as one of the world's favorite meals for hungry people who can't wait.

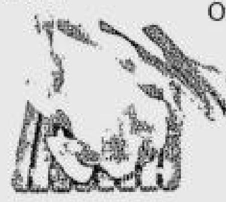
From then on, Mr. Ando never stopped, inventing Nissin Cup Noodles in 1971 and other technological innovations in the instant food industry—the latest being the first Space Ramen in 2006.

Now the same Japanese spirit of innovation is being used to make the first instant misua from Nissin—a proudly Pinoy noodle—in Cup Noodle format.

Nissin has achieved a fusion of Pinoy taste and Japanese technology.

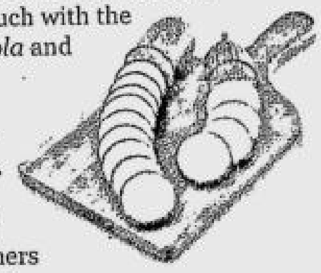
Distinctly Pinoy. Misua mismo.

We searched the local countryside, going as far as Batangas for the perfect misua. We tried everything from roadside eateries to gourmet restaurants—anything to capture this classic Pinoy rice noodle. We were looking for the right texture, thickness, color and the clean translucency of true misua.



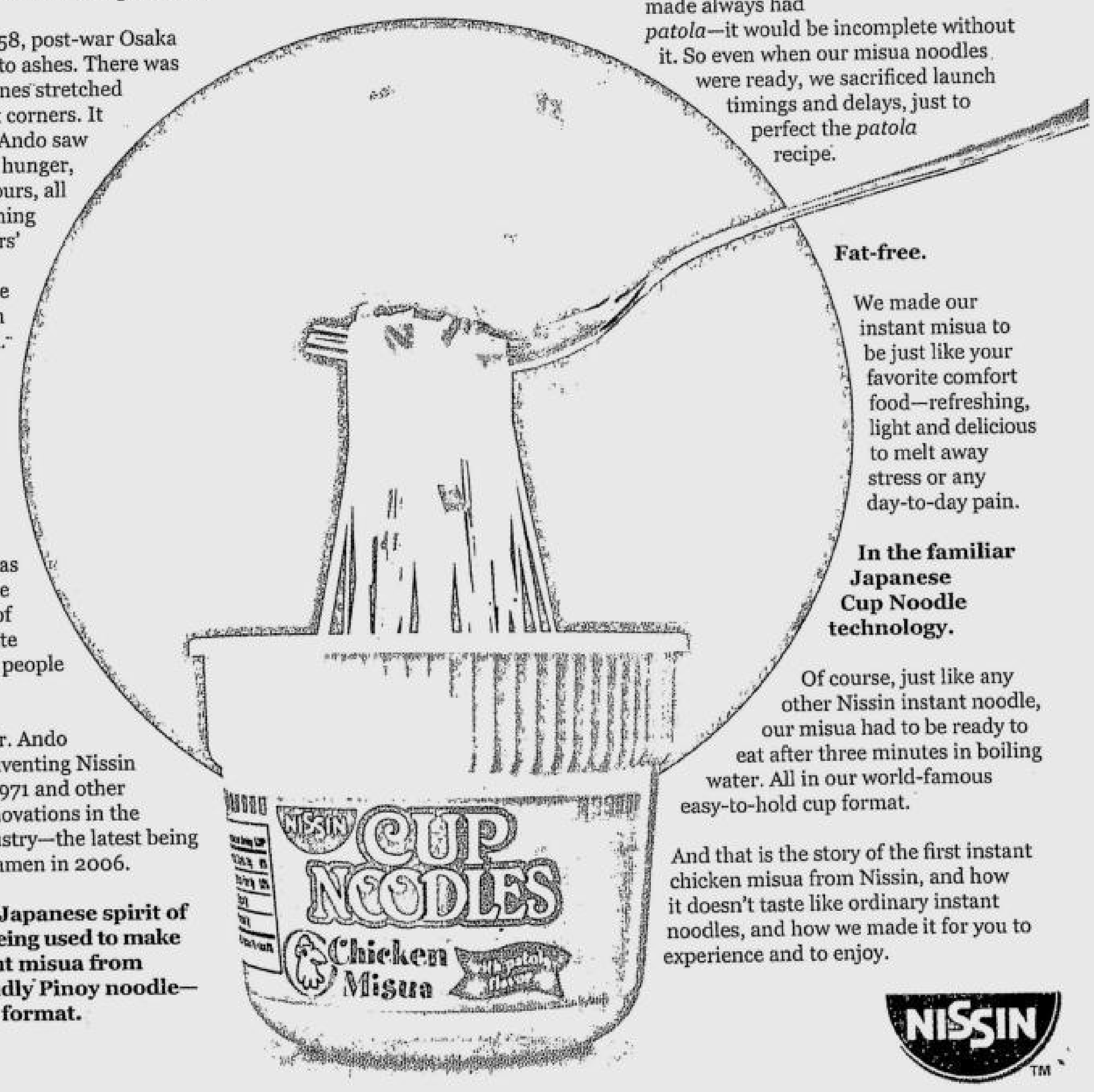
Chicken Misua for the soul.

Our mothers knew all along. There's nothing like chicken misua to calm a restless heart or to soothe an ailing soul. It has to be prepared with great love and care to be able to do this. That's why we didn't tamper much with the *sinaunang patola* and chicken mix.



Enhanced by *patola* flavor.

The traditional misua our mothers made always had *patola*—it would be incomplete without it. So even when our misua noodles were ready, we sacrificed launch timings and delays, just to perfect the *patola* recipe.



Fat-free.

We made our instant misua to be just like your favorite comfort food—refreshing, light and delicious to melt away stress or any day-to-day pain.

In the familiar Japanese Cup Noodle technology.

Of course, just like any other Nissin instant noodle, our misua had to be ready to eat after three minutes in boiling water. All in our world-famous easy-to-hold cup format.

And that is the story of the first instant chicken misua from Nissin, and how it doesn't taste like ordinary instant noodles, and how we made it for you to experience and to enjoy.

NISSIN™

RP SENIORS OPEN

3-way fight seen; listing extended

CLAVECILLA

DEFENDING CHAMPion Iggy Clavecilla, Rolly Viray and Francis Gaston loom as the top favorites to rule the 2007 Philippine Senior Amateur Open slated May 17 to 19 at the Iloilo Golf and Country Club.

Organizers yesterday decided to move the deadline for registration to May 15 to accommodate more bidders in the annual event.

Clavecilla ran away with the championship last year and could make it back-to-back if his current form continues.

Out to wrest the crown from him are Viray and Gaston, two of the country's most consistent seniors last year, as well as Bing Bunye, Severino Roxas Chua and local bets Roberto Sinfuego, Usamo Ikeda and Bien Badajos.

The National Golf Association of the Philippines expects close to a hundred players to vie in the tournament, with the bulk of entries tipped to register after the national elections on Monday.

Former President Fidel V. Ramos, Transportation Secretary and NGAP president Leandro Mendoza, IGCC president Frankie Locsin and Federation of Senior Golfers president Horacio Paredes have been invited to hit the ceremonial drive in the event to be held in conjunction with the 100th year celebration of the Sta. Barbara course.

Harbour Centre is the event's major sponsor with Philippine Airlines as the official carrier.

For inquiries, call the NGAP at (632) 525-6987 and (632) 524-5160 or Susan Facundo at (0917-5607074).

Inquirer Sports Staff

Escaño shines in Sherwood Hills tourney

THE SHERWOOD HILLS GOLF CLUB FORMALly announced its inclusion in the Golf Digest International course review as the 85th best course outside the Unites States and No. 1 in Southeast Asia when it hosted an appreciation day and 18-hole tournament last week.

Thirdy Escaño, a member of Sherwood Hills' sports and games committee, used his course familiarity to fire a five-under net 67 and bag the overall honors.

Escaño, a five-handicapper, shot three birdies on the front nine that offset a double bogey on the sixth hole. He added two more birdies on the 12th and 15th.

Iloilo-based Minieng Maravilla submitted a three-under net 69 to win the runner-up trophy over Richie Garcia, a commissioner of the Philippine Sports Commission and chair of the Federation of Golf Clubs, who had a 70.

INQUIRER Golf Monthly editor Jong Arcano won the top plum with a net 70 in the media division followed by Manila Bulletin sports editor Ding Marcelo (72) and Philippine Star sports editor Lito Tacujan (75).

Former Philippine President Fidel V. Ramos attended the affair along with Transportation Secretary and NGAP head Larry Mendoza, Garcia, Trece Martirez Mayor Jun de Sagun, Sherwoods Hills chair Robert John Sobrepeña, president Ogie Manalo and sports and games committee chair Jimmy Borromeo.

"Our efforts to provide a world-class golfing facility have finally paid off," said Sobrepeña. "The award, in fact, inspires us even more to further improve Sherwood Hills' course maintenance and service to the members."

PHILIPPINE DAILY INQUIRER

IN THIS ISSUE

- **RP firms emerge** as world's top energy cost managers /B9
- **Technology trickling** down to the farmers /B12

BUSINESS

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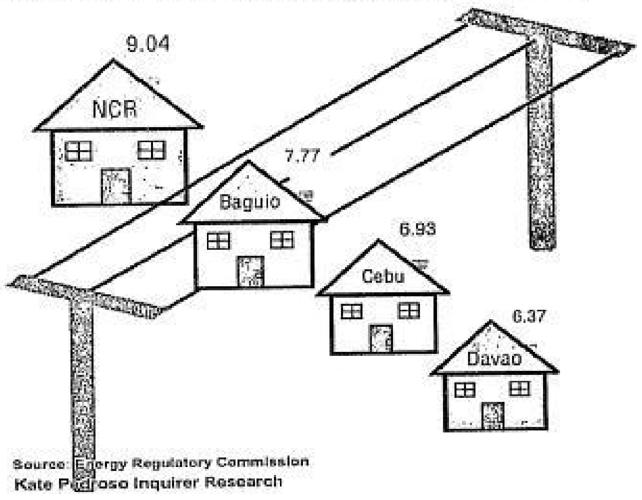
PETRON DIESEL MAX
Max. Diesel Max.

Coco exports slumped 50% in 1st quarter

INQUIRER MONITOR
Figures that matter in our nation's life

Residential electricity rates
(As of Jan 2007, in centavos per kilowatt hour)



Source: Energy Regulatory Commission
Kate Pedroso Inquirer Research

Destruction caused by strong typhoons takes toll on production

By Ronnel W. Domingo

THE COUNTRY'S EXPORTS OF MAJOR COCONUT-BASED PRODUCTS were halved in the first quarter as the destruction of trees during a series of strong typhoons in late 2006 started to affect production.

According to preliminary data from the United Coconut Associations of the Philippines, shipments as of end-March reached only 244,878 metric tons, down 50.34 percent from 493,152 MT in the first quarter of 2006.

All four major products suffered decreased exports, with coconut oil down by 59.9 percent to 106,563 MT; copra meal by 61.6 percent to 45,781 MT; desiccated coconut by 22.9 percent to 24,869 MT, and oleo-chemicals by 71.2 percent to 37,281 MT in copra terms.

Shipments for the month of March also shrank by 65.5 percent to 81,929 MT from 237,476 MT a year ago. March shipments also showed a decrease of 6.2 percent from 87,313 MT in February 2007.

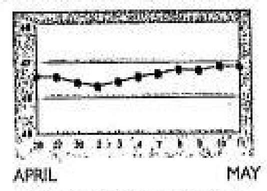
Total revenues for coconut oil, copra meal and desiccated coconut dropped by 54.4 percent to about $37.6 million from $82.5 million in March 2006.

Volume of coconut oil shipments in March shrank to 34,371 MT, which was just about a quarter of year-ago figures, while those of copra

COCO/ B4

INDICATORS

CURRENCIES



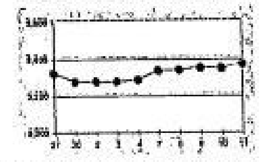
PESO-DOLLAR RATE

₱47.175 = $1

As of 5 p.m., May 11, 2007

STOCK MARKET

PSE COMPOSITE INDEX



(See stock market report on Page B6)

Shares close higher

SHARE PRICES CLOSED 0.67 PERCENT higher yesterday, supported by interest in select blue chips, dealers said.

They said it was a seesaw session as investors were reluctant to take position aggressively following Wall Street's slide overnight and ahead of Monday's mid-term elections.

SHARES/ B4

BSP issues guidelines on GOCC deposits

By Michelle V. Remo

THE BANGKO SENTRAL NG PILIPINAS has released the guidelines for government-owned and -controlled corporations (GOCCs) that may want to deposit their funds with the central bank.

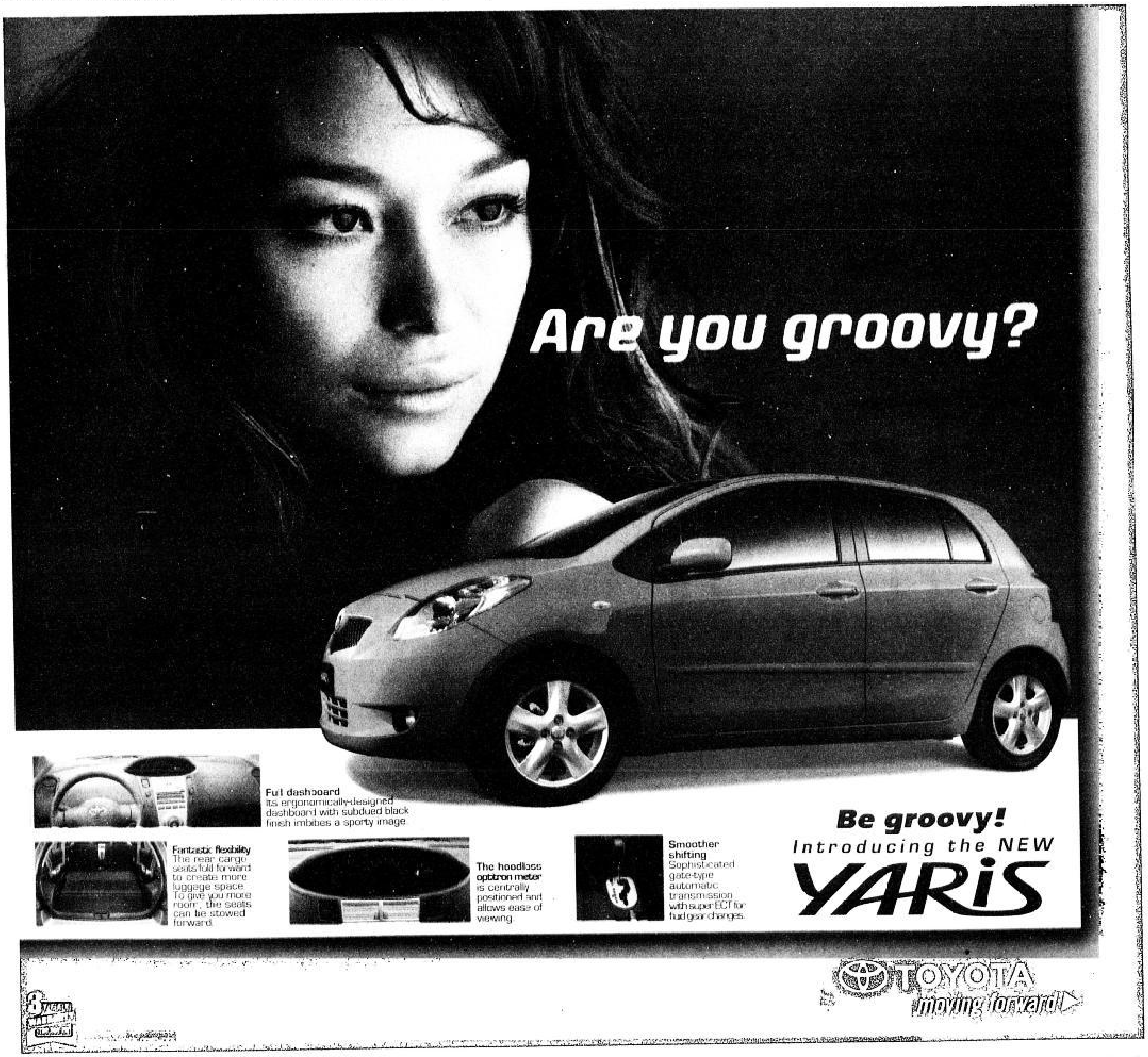
BSP Deputy Governor Diwa Guinigundo told reporters that the BSP's treasury department circulated the guidelines the other day to the treasury departments of GOCCs, which monetary officials hope would park funds with the central bank to mop up excess liquidity in the system.

Guinigundo said GOCCs interested to place deposits with the BSP would be required to put in a minimum of P50 million and in increments of P1 million.

He added that the interest rate on deposits by GOCCs would be based on treasury bill rates and deposit rates offered by regular banks. The interest on GOCC deposits will thus vary daily according to movements of market rates.

But the BSP official assured that the interest rate to be offered to GOCCs

BSP/ B4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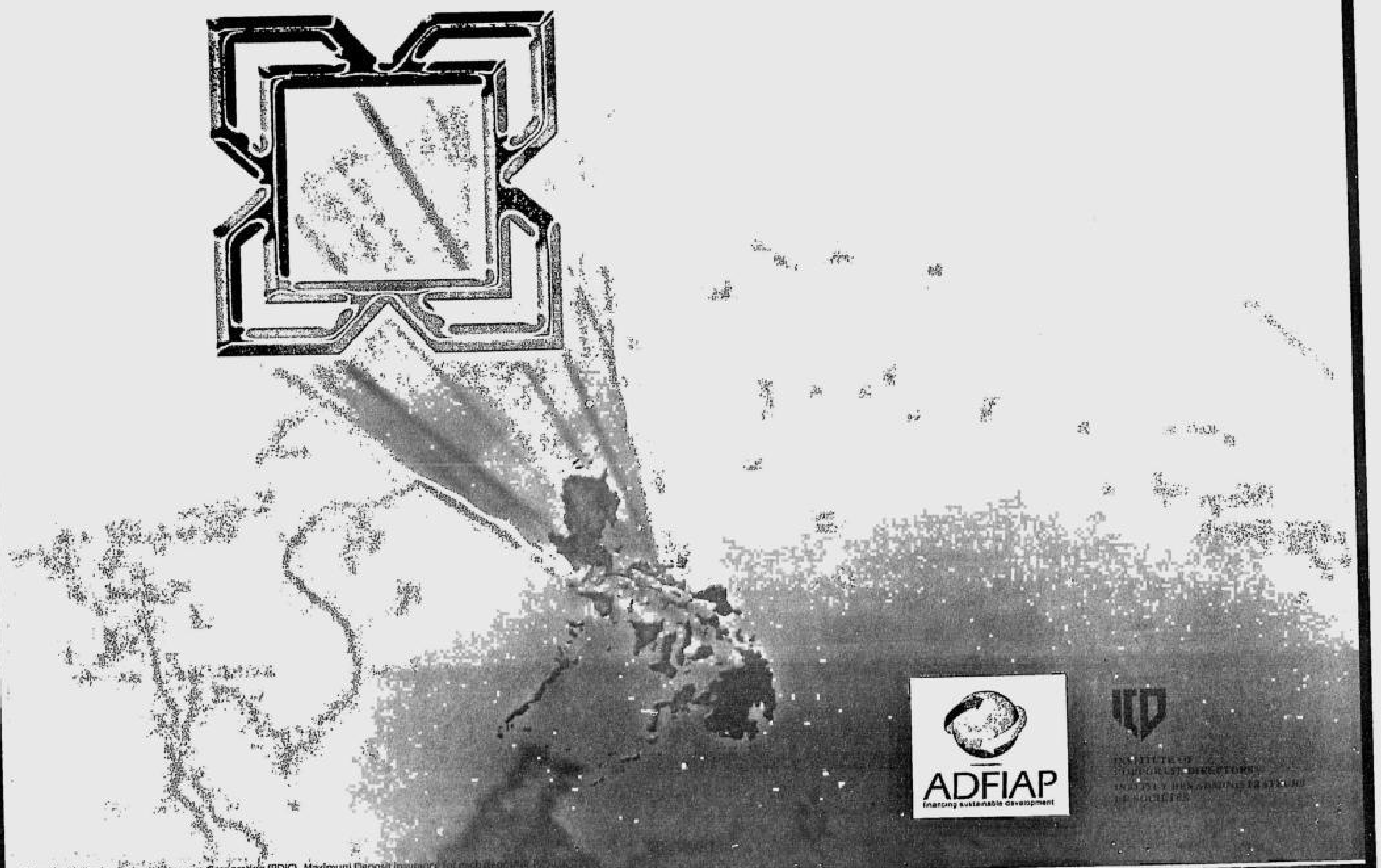
Leading the country's efforts to benchmark sound management and international good practice, DBP proudly stands steadfast, manifesting its commitment through a culture of excellence, ethics, compliance, and a deep spirit of public service.

DBP likewise scored highest among 31 Government-Owned and Controlled Corporations in the Corporate Governance Scorecard of the Institute of Corporate Directors, an organization which advocates corporate governance reform and professional corporate directorship in the Philippines.

Proving right the premise that good governance results in business viability, DBP achieved a record net income of P3.7 billion in 2006, and continues to deliver value as a premier development financial institution performing a catalytic role in the growth of the country's key economic sectors.

Indeed, good governance is a necessary corollary of sustainable national development.

DBP enjoins all Filipinos to embrace good corporate governance principles and prove to the world that excellence, work ethic, and industry will thrust the Philippines to its rightful place in a progressive global future.



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No brownouts on election day, say DOE, power companies

By Abigail L. Ho

TO ENSURE THAT THERE WILL BE NO POWER outages on election day Monday and the rest of the week, the Department of Energy has issued a circular ordering all power utilities to provide sufficient electricity to all areas in the country.

Department Circular 2007-05-0004 mandates the state-owned National Power Corp., National Transmission Corp., PNOC Energy Development Corp., Philippine Electricity Market Corp., National Electrification Administration, Manila Electric Co. and all other distribution utilities to ensure that there will be no power interruptions on Monday.

"All electric power utilities and service providers must ensure provision of uninterrupted power supply on the day prior to and during Election Day, until the termination/conclusion of the canvassing of the election returns and proclamation of the elected officials," the circular said.

It likewise directed all power utilities and service providers to closely coordinate with the Commission on Elections, local government units and community organizations.

According to Napocor data, available power supply on May 14 was placed at more than 7,400 megawatts (MW), more than enough to meet the projected demand of 5,600 MW.

Most of the electricity on that day would come from coal-fired power plants, followed by natural gas, hydro and geothermal.

The state firm said all its plants had adequate fuel supply.

While giving these assurances, Napocor said it has still laid out some contingency measures to address whatever power problems would arise, if any.

These contingencies included the use of land-based gas turbine power plants that would provide back-up and reserve for the Cebu-Negros-Panay grid in the Visayas, arrangements with Transco for the use of hydropower generation to support emergency power requirements in Luzon, and the installation of standby additional capacities from power barges and independent power producers that would be dispatched whenever needed in Mindanao.

Napocor has likewise advanced or deferred maintenance works on its power plants, cancelled all testing and maintenance schedules a week before and after May 14, maintained an operating reserve of at least 13.1 percent, and closely coordinated with the Armed Forces of the Philippines and local police for the security of its generation facilities.

For its part, Meralco said its employees, particularly the line crews, would be on general alert before, during and after the elections.

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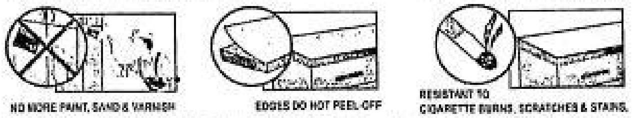
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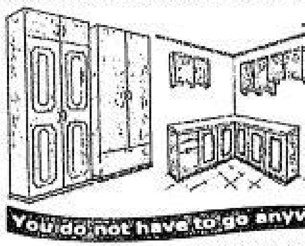

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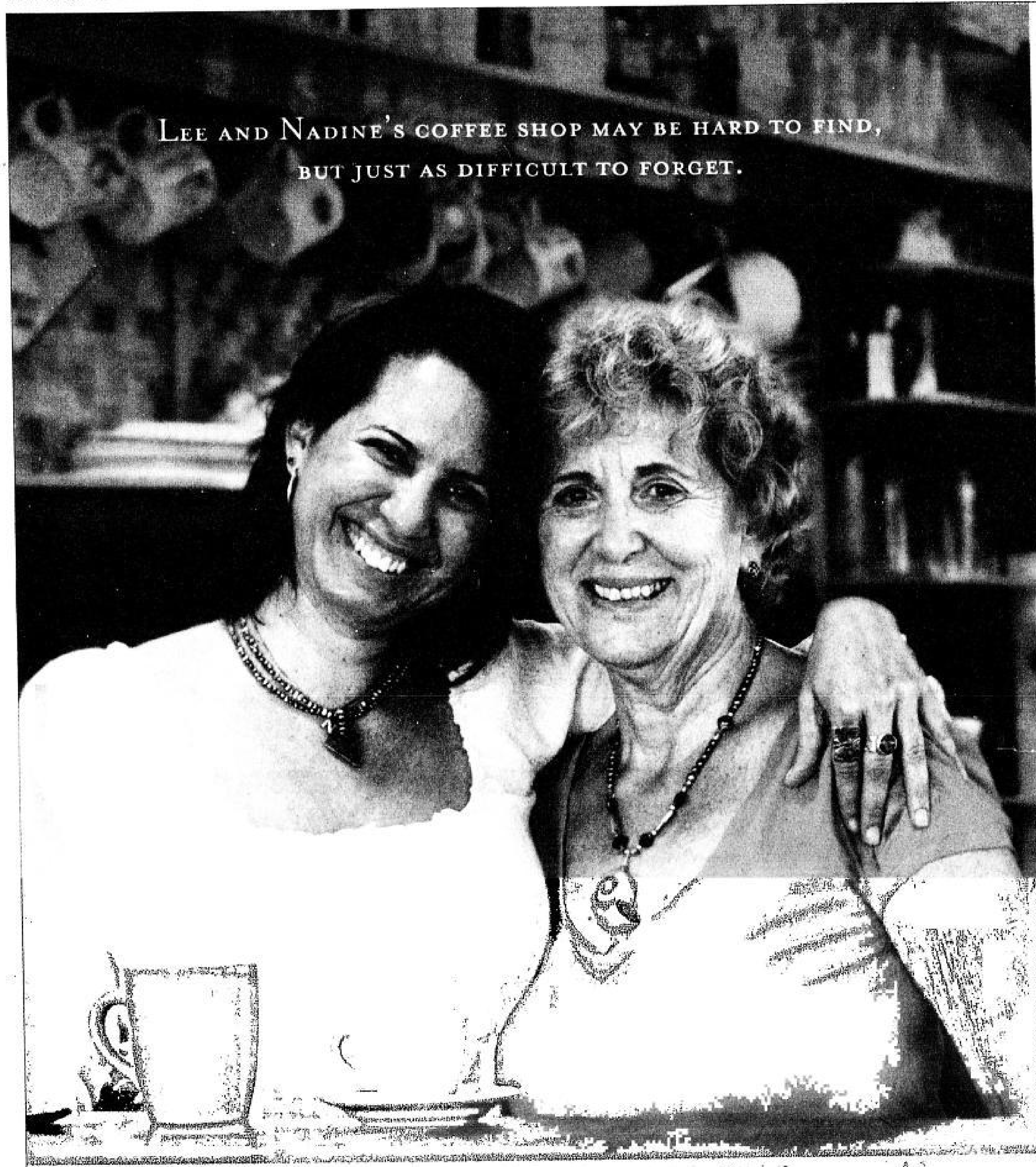
Lee and Nadine's coffee shop may be hard to find, but just as difficult to forget.

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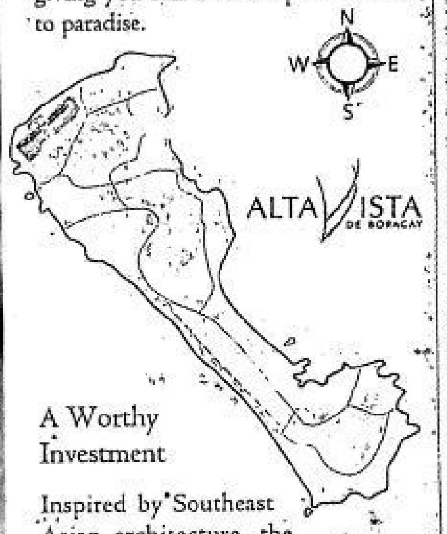

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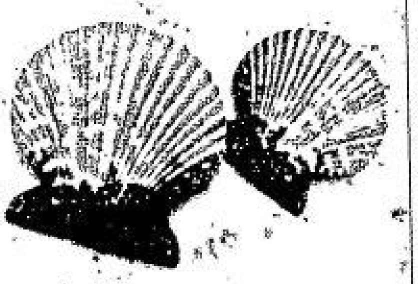

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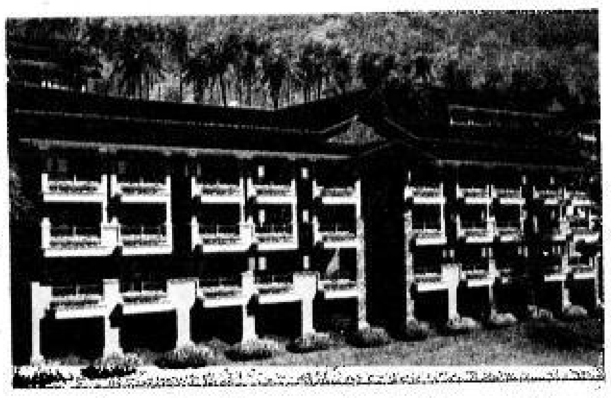

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DA seeks new offers for Food Terminal property

Yap says agency needs money to put up regional processing centers

By Amy R. Remo

THE DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE has opened its doors to groups interested in acquiring the 100-hectare Food Terminals Inc. property in Taguig City even as it awaits the formal proposal of the Government Service Insurance System, which earlier expressed interest in the FTI property, according to Agriculture Secretary Arthur C. Yap.

As the only agro-industrial-commercial estate located in the heart of Metro Manila, FTI houses more than 300 small- to medium-scale companies involved in food manufacturing, electronics, garments and service industries.

It was originally built to be a food processing and consolidation center for farmers' goods.

Yap also rejected proposals to revert the FTI property to its original purpose. "Why should FTI be reengineered? It's doesn't make sense to put a food processing and consolidating center too near the city. You can't bring in live hogs, for instance, and have these pass through main highways," said Yap.

"What's the value of FTI right now? The value of the land may probably be greater than the value of its operations," said Yap. The FTI land is estimated to be worth about P20,000 a square meter.

"We want to break up (the huge FTI processing center). The proceeds from the sale will be used for investments in regional processing centers because farmers in the provinces need these centers more than we in the city do," Yap said.

The official added that what they wanted to do was break up big processing and consolidation centers and put up more smaller centers in various provinces nationwide.

He said regional food processing and consolidation centers would be put up in North Mindanao, Davao, southern Mindanao, western Visayas, eastern Visayas , Regions 1 and 2, and Central Luzon.

"Any offer, any taker is welcome and it's okay if the potential taker would want to make it into a commercial center," Yap told reporters. "FTI can be much more than what it is right now."

Coco exports slumped . . .

From page B1

meal by 31.4 percent to 23,863 MT and desiccated coconut by about a tenth to 10,521 MT.

Still, oleochemicals proved lucrative due to high demand with shipments expanding 105.8 percent to 11,106 MT in copra terms.

In March, two-thirds of coconut oil exports were delivered to the European market while the United States took up 14.5 percent. Japan and Canada bought the rest. South Korea absorbed almost all of the month's copra meal shipment while a small fraction went to New Zealand.

Documents from the Philippine Coconut Authority showed that some 42 million coconut trees were damaged due to Typhoon Reming, which ravaged southern Luzon in late November last year.

At the same time, the CIIF Oil Mills Group said that of the 3.1 million hectares nationwide that were classified as coconut farmlands, 15 percent or 450,000 hectares need to be replanted. These account for land with trees too old to bear nuts or land that had been dedicated for coconut farming but remained idle.

Aside from that, 750,000 hectares need to be fertilized as the land lacked nutrients to support nut-bearing trees. Ucap said domestic coconut output was expected to slide by 8.9 percent in 2007 to 2.24 million metric tons in copra terms.

Shares close higher

From page B1

The composite index added 22.4 points to 3,364.61, after trading between 3,364.98 and 3,323.96.

Gainers led losers 62 to 48 with 57 stocks unchanged.

Turnover was 3.85 billion shares worth P3.75 billion.

"Sentiment was mixed, with investors generally cautious ahead of Monday's polls but there were company-specific leads out there that helped sustain the momentum," said Lawrence de Leon, an analyst at Accord Capital Equities.

Those leads included San Miguel's announcement earlier in the week of its plan to spin off its beer and packaging businesses and sell shares to the public, which continued to sustain interest in the stock.

Southeast Asia's biggest food and beverage group also plans to raise $500 million to fund its expansion into other businesses.

San Miguel's A-shares rose P4 to P70.50 while its B-shares, open to foreign investors, jumped P3.50 to P81.

SM Investments Corp. advanced P7.50 to P377.50 after the conglomerate posted a 14-percent year-on-year increase in first-quarter net profit.

AFP

PSALM bullish on hitting Napocor privatization targets

By Abigail L. Ho

EVEN AFTER NUMEROUS SETBACKS and years of delay, the state-owned Power Sector Assets and Liabilities Management Corp. may be on its way to finally achieving the 70-percent privatization level for assets of National Power Corp. in Luzon and the Visayas.

PSALM president and chief executive Jose Ibazeta said the target was achievable, particularly if the agency would be able to hit the 50-percent level within the year.

"The percentage will really depend on market appetite. Maybe we can get 50 percent by this year and 70 percent by next year. We can always try to achieve (these targets)," he said.

For this year, he said PSALM planned to privatize the Masinloc and Calaca coal-fired power plants, both rated at 600 megawatts (MW), and another geothermal facility.

It also aimed to push through with the bidding for the 25-year National Transmission Corp. concession before year's end, he said.

PSALM has so far sold eight hydropower facilities equivalent to only 11 percent of Napocor's generation capacities.

These included the 3.5-MW Talomo plant in Davao, the 1.6-MW Agusan facility in Bukidnon, the 1.8-MW Barit plant in Camarines Sur, the 0.4-MW Cawayan plant in Sorsogon, the 1.2-MW Loboc plant in Bohol, the 112-MW Pantabangan-Masiway package in Nueva Ecija, and the 360-MW Magat plant in Isabela.

If PSALM would be able to stick to its privatization schedule for the year, it would be able to hit the 50-percent level before end-2007.

Apart from Masinloc and Calaca, PSALM should be able to privatize at least another 500 MW of capacity to hit its target for 2007.

This could likely come from the 660-MW Tiwi-Makban geothermal facility.

According to the most recent status report on the implementation of RA 9136, or the Electric Power Industry Reform Act of 2001 (Epira), PSALM will have to come up with concrete solutions to problems that are hampering the privatization of Napocor's assets.

"The sale of Napocor's generating assets has proceeded at a snail's pace, in view of the many external factors that are not within the control of PSALM. In view thereof, there is a need to identify solutions to critical factors that may result in further delay in the privatization of Napocor's generating assets," the report said.

"Nonetheless, an assessment of the viability and updating of assumptions used in coming up with a sale sequence is needed to be done by the (Department of Energy), PSALM and Napocor," the report added.

BSP issues guidelines on GOCC deposits

From page B1

would be higher than treasury bill rates and those offered by regular banks, although it would be lower than the 7.5-percent key policy rate of the central bank.

The key policy rate of the BSP is the interest earned by banks for their deposits with the central bank.

Winston Garcia, president and general manager of the state-owned Government Service Insurance System (GSIS), earlier questioned why the BSP could not offer GOCCs an interest rate similar to that offered to banks.

Guinigundo explained that the banks were given a higher interest rate because they perform a financial intermediary function. While the banks' core function is lending, the same is not true for GOCCs, the BSP official said.

But Guinigundo said GOCCs, unlike banks, would be exempted from the tiering scheme, wherein the highest interest is paid only for the first P5 billion worth of deposits.

Guinigundo said the BSP was targeting to initially mop up as much as P60 billion in excess liquidity from the system with the implementation of its new monetary measures, which included encouraging GOCCs to deposit with the BSP.

Other measures implemented by the BSP to siphon off excess liquidity was to allow trust departments of banks to directly deposit funds with the BSP. Trust departments will be subjected to the same deposit rules as those applied on banks, and will therefore be covered by the tiering scheme.

The BSP wants to mop up excess liquidity and slow down growth of money supply to below 20 percent. The BSP said a sustained growth of money supply beyond 20 percent puts the government's inflation targets at risk. In March, domestic liquidity grew by 24.6 percent year-on-year.

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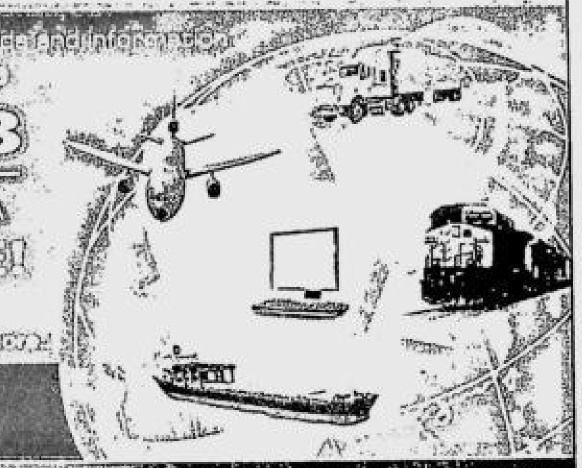
and COMMERCIAL VEHICLE SHOW
Highlight: "SUPPLY CHAIN MANAGEMENT"



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The Culmination from a Long Journey

CONVERGYS

Words by Kirby Garlitos
Photos by Lemuel Arrogante

Opening a new office is never an easy task. Weeks of preparation have to be done to make sure everything is where it should be. Even more so, there is also the planning stage when months of stressful, not to mention sleepless, nights at the meeting table takes place. So they say, the planning is as, if not even more, bloody as the preparation.

The pressures involved in the high-stakes game of the business world make these two aspects even more crucial. The smallest bit of loose information, the tiniest missed idea, all of these things play an integral part in determining the success of a corporation's effort to open a new office.

For Convergys, the opening of their latest site in Cebu is a result of months of calculated planning, nerve-wracking preparations and a wide variety of impassioned debates to go along with it. As Stephen Slade, Convergys Site Director in Cebu, will attest, "We faced many challenges and hurdles along the way, but it has always been our dream to grow bigger. So, we kept on trudging and in the end, we managed to overcome all the obstacles."

Convergys opened its doors to the Cebuanos when it opened its first Cebu site in Banawa, Cebu in November 2004, in the hopes of bringing in fresh and dedicated employees from the "The Queen of the South". The move turned out to be a successful one as people from all over Cebu applied to work for the company. Today, the site employs over 1,200 professionals and has become a vital cog in the Convergys machinery. This steady growth earned the company the distinction of being one the largest, multi-client, US company-owned contact center operations in the country.

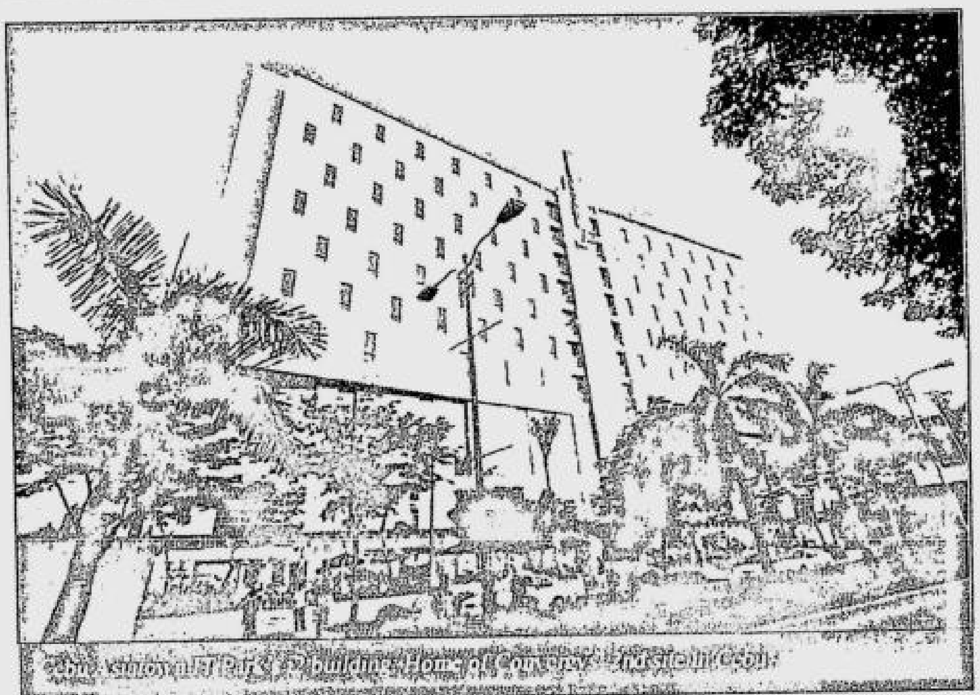
But Convergys refuses to bask in the limelight, and instead work harder to make the company grow even more. With their continued commitment to hiring the best possible workforce, coupled with the success of their first Cebu site in Banawa, the opening of a second site in the southern island soon became a question of 'when' rather than 'if'.

PGMA shakes the hand of a Convergys employee as Vice President & Country General Manager Marife Zamora and other guests look on.

After months of planning and preparation, the second Convergys site in Cebu has opened.

The opening was attended by the top-brass of Convergys including Executive Vice President of Global Operations and Customer Care Clint Streit, Vice President and Country Manager Marife Zamora, Convergys Cebu Site Director Stephen Slade, and Vice President of Operations Ivic Mueco.

The event also had its share of noteworthy guests, headed by no less than Her Excellency President Gloria Macapagal-Arroyo. Along with the Chief-of-State, the event was heavily attended by a number of high-ranking Cebu officials including Governor Gwen .



Cebu Asiatown IT Park's i2 building: Home of Convergys' 2nd site in Cebu

(L-R) Vice President and Country Manager Marife Zamora, Vice President of Operations Ivic Mueco and Convergys Cebu Site Director Stephen Slade

The new site covers the 11th and 12th floor of the i2Building, located at Jose Maria del Mar Avenue in Asiatown IT Park, Lahug. The soon-to-be employees will provide general support and advanced technical help desk services to a wide-range of Convergys clients through communication such as traditional voice calling, e-mail, and web chat as well as "back office" application and document processing..

"Our commitment to this facility is a long-term investment in this region; to work with some of the best talents in Cebu and develop them to become tomorrow's Convergys leaders," says Ivic Mueco, Vice President of Operations.

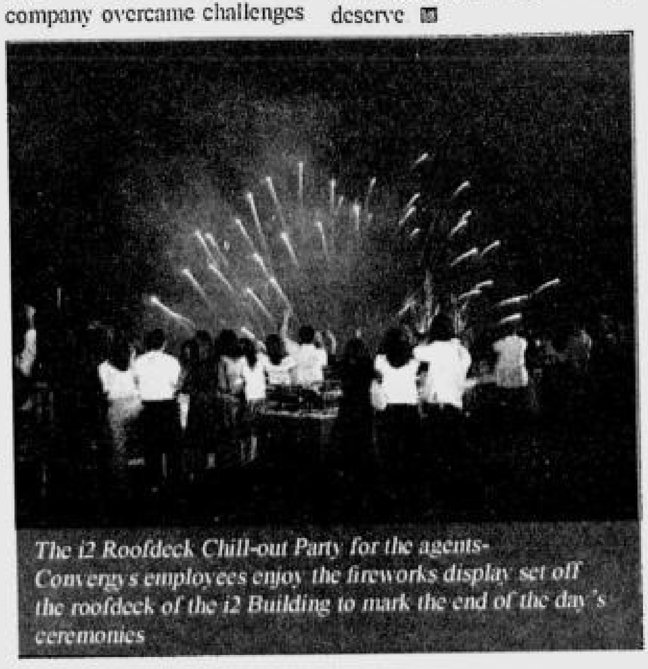
"As one of the world's leading providers of outsourced customer care services, Convergys will be the driver of this industry," Mueco adds. "The opening of this site is confirmation that Convergys will continue to grow, and we hope to keep on growing and extending beyond Manila and Cebu."

Indeed, the opening of the Asiatown site is validation for the company. Months of planning and preparation got them to where they are today.

The French playwright Moliere was quoted as saying, "The greater the obstacle, the more glory in overcoming it." Through their perseverance and determination, the company overcame challenges that culminated in the opening of the 8th Convergys contact center in the Republic of the Philippines.

With the opening of the Convergys-Asiatown site, Convergys can now lay claim to the glory that they so richly deserve ■

PGMA with (from left) Congressman Raul del Mar, Commission on Information and Communications Technology Secretary Ramon Sales, Cebu Governor Gwendolyn Garcia, Cebu Vice Mayor Michael Rama, and Convergys executives.



The i2 Roofdeck Chill-out Party for the agents-Convergys employees enjoy the fireworks display set off the roofdeck of the i2 Building to mark the end of the day's ceremonies

Jollibee Q1 income up 18%

Megaworld nets ₱784M as of March

MEGAWORLD CORP.'S NET PROFIT jumped to P784 million in the first quarter of 2007, 30 percent higher than in the same period last year.

In a statement, Megaworld also reported that its total revenues for the quarter reached P2.9 billion, up 43 percent year-on-year.

Real estate sales, meanwhile, climbed 54 percent to P1.85 billion from P1.2 billion a year ago. Real estate sales growth was driven primarily by the company's major live-work-play communities, such as Eastwood City in Quezon City, McKinley Hill and Forbes Town Center in Fort Bonifacio, and Newport City at the Villamor Air Base in Pasay City.

Rental income for the quarter reached P209 million, up 25 percent year on year.

Megaworld's robust performance in the first quarter highlights the underlying strength not only of the BPO office market but also of the mid-income residential market.

Megaworld is a leader in these two markets, which are the fastest growing in the real estate industry today.

Megaworld also said that it is on track to reach its net income target of P2.9 billion this year. Company officials expect earnings growth to be sustained as Megaworld has lined up three new projects for launching within the second quarter of the year.

Following the success of Phases 2 and 3 of the McKinley Hill Garden Villas in Fort Bonifacio, Megaworld will introduce McKinley Hill Tuscany Private Estate, a gated enclave of medium-rise garden villas for a high-end market.

It is also set to unveil the Three Stamford Executive Residences, the last of a three-tower project adjacent to the McKinley Hill CyberPark.

ICT revenue gained 16% in first qtr

INTERNATIONAL CONTAINER TERminal Services Inc. yesterday reported its consolidated gross revenues rose 16 percent in the first quarter.

No actual comparative figures were disclosed.

Based on the company's previous financial statement filed with the Philippine Stock Exchange (PSE), its net income was P374.8 million in the first quarter of 2006.

This was driven mainly by strong volume growth reported by its operations in Manila, Poland, Brazil and Madagascar.

Revenues from port operations, net of the share of port authorities in the first quarter, also rose 20 percent compared to the same period last year.

No comparative figures were also disclosed.

On Thursday, the board of ICTSI Warehousing Inc. declared cash dividends of P94.72 per share or an aggregate of P757.76 million to its sole shareholder, ICTSI.

Elizabeth Sanchez-Lacson

Strong sales here and abroad pushed income up to P529M

By Elizabeth Sanchez-Lacson

FAST FOOD GIANT JOLLIBEE Foods Corp. reported that its net income rose 18 percent in the first quarter to P529 milion from the P448 million posted in the same period last year.

In a disclosure to the Philippine Stock Exchange (PSE), Jollibee said revenues picked up 14.8 percent to P8.7 billion in the first quarter, from P7.58 billion year-on-year.

Its system-wide sales, a measure of all sales to consumers both from company-owned and franchised stores, grew by 13 percent over the first quarter of 2006.

JFC chair Tony Tan Caktiong said JFC's businesses in the Philippines and abroad continued to perform strongly in the first quarter.

"Overall, our Philippine stores achieved growth rates that were higher than in the past two years," he said. "We attribute the strong growth to a recovery in consumer spending behind an improving economy and to our product launches and marketing campaigns."

Tan Caktiong added that store sales for JFC's international business continued its growth streak in practically every foreign market it ventures into and across all brands.

"The consumers in our markets abroad are clearly responding to our continuing effort to improve our products, particularly in product tastes and our services," he said.

JFC chief finance officer, Ysmael V. Baysa stated that operating profit before tax grew by 22.3 percent in the first quarter of 2007 compared with the same period in 2006, driven by a 14.8 percent increase in revenues and an improvement in operating margin from 7.5 percent in the first quarter last year to 8 percent in 2007.

TAN CAKTIONG

He added that the improvement in margin was achieved in spite of investment spending in some brands and the slight increase in the cost of sales.

"We are putting more advertising money in some brands as an investment for their long-term growth," Baysa said. "Meanwhile, we have avoided price increases even as some costs had gone up slightly. We believe that this has helped spur the growth in sales volume. The last real price increase we implemented in November 2005."

JFC had opened a total of 24 stores in the first quarter of 2007. JFC also operates the largest food service network in the Philippines.

Lopez group takes toll road business through backdoor

THE LOPEZ GROUP IS REVIVING the operations of dormant listed firm City Resources Corp. (CRC) to hold its interest in toll road infrastructure development.

The transfer of the Lopez Group's toll road assets to CRC will be implemented through a share-swap with Lopez flagship firm Benpres Holdings Corp. and First Philippine Holdings Corp. (FPHC) in the next two months.

This will result in the "backdoor listing" of the Manila North Tollways Corporation (MNTC), the concessionaire for the 84-km North Luzon Expressway, Benpres chair Oscar Lopez said.

NLEX is the main artery to the major economic and tourism growth corridor north of Manila. These include Pangasinan Industrial Park, Luisita Industrial Park, Clark Special Economic Zone, Subic Bay Freeport and Special Economic Zone, First Bulacan Industrial City, Bataan Economic Zone, Pagudpod Beach, Fort Ilocandia, La Union Beach, the Ifugao Rice Terraces and Baguio City.

CRC obtained shareholder approval yesterday that would allow FPHC and Benpres to issue shares to CRC. In exchange, FPHC and Benpres will own a combined 99 percent in CRC.

Shareholders also approved a plan to rename CRC to First Philippine Infrastructure Inc. (FPII).

In turn, FPHC and Benpres will issue shares to CRC. This will enable CRC to wholly own First Philippine Infrastructure Development Corp. (FPIDC), the Lopez group's main vehicle for toll road infrastructure projects.

Under the planned swap, one share of FPIDC with a par value of P100 will be exchanged for 168.51 shares of City Resources, with a par value of P1 per share.

This means that CRC will issue a total of 2.435 billion shares to Benpres in exchange for 14.45 million shares in FPIDC. CRC will also issue a total of 2.534 billion shares to FPHC in exchange for 15 million shares in FPIDC.

CRC will conduct a tender offer for the balance of approximately 0.2 percent in minority shareholders of the company.

In 1994, CRC sold its mining rights in Camarines Norte. That same year, the Securities and Exchange Commission approved the change in the company's business purpose to that of a holding firm. Since then, however, the company has not conducted any business, prompting the Philippine Stock Exchange to suspend trading of its shares in May 1994.

In 1996, Lopez Inc., the group's private investment firm acquired the right to buy 91.6 percent of CRC from Starfield Holdings Inc.

Elizabeth Sanchez-Lacson

SEC approves Aboitiz Power IPO

THE SECURITIES AND EXCHANGE Commission (SEC) has approved Aboitiz Power Corp.'s initial public offer, which is hoped to generate P12 billion for the company.

Aboitiz Power said its offer price has been set at P6 a share, and consisted of two billion shares.

Of the two billion shares, 1.7 billion common shares will be offered via a primary offer (new issue of shares), while 300 million shares will cover possible additional offerings depending on market demand (overallotments).

APC's proposed offer has been increased from an earlier disclosure that stated it will raise P8.4 billion from an offering of 1.8 billion shares.

The offer period will be held from July 4 to 10.

Aboitiz is a 100-percent owned subsidiary of Aboitiz Equity Ventures.

Proceeds of the IPO will be used to beef up APC's financial muscle to expand its current generating capacity through a participation in the ongoing privatization of the National Power Corp. and in undertaking greenfield, or new power, projects.

In a recent power sector forum by Citiseconline.Com, AEV senior vice president Juan Antonio Bernad said the Aboitiz Group plans to pursue greenfield projects such as the 30-megawatt (MW) hydroelecric power project in Tamugan, Davao; the 200-MW Cebu coal plant project; the 300-MW Subic coal plant; the 100-MW Davao coal plant; and, the expansion of a hydroelecric power project in Sibulan, Davao.

The Aboitiz Group is also interested in acquiring other assets, such as the government's 600-MW coal-fired Masinloc coal plant in Zambales, the combined 175-MW Ambuklao and Binga hydroelectric plants in Benguet, the 193-MW Palimpinon geothermal field in Negros Island, and the 113-MW Tongonan geothermal reservoir in Leyte, and a privately controlled 210-MW coal-fired plant in Mindanao.

APC earlier said it bought 50 percent, or roughly 50 million shares, of Cebu thermal plant operator East Asia Utilities Corp. (EAUC) for P131 million.

The EAUC stake was acquired from El Paso Philippines Energy Co. Inc. (EPPECI).

As part of the deal, APC will also assume P878 million of El Paso's debt to EAUC.

EAUC operates a 50-MW thermal plant within the Mactan Export Processing Zone I (MEPZ I) in Mactan Island, Cebu.

Since 1997, the EAUC power plant has been the sole provider of power to MEPZ I, delivering reliable, high quality power to meet the stringent requirements of semiconductor firms, electronics manufacturers and other locators within the zone.

APC also acquired 3.6 million common shares or 48 percent of EAUC's wholly owned subsidiary, Cebu Private Power Corporation (CPPC), for approximately P176 million.

These assets were part of the Philippine electricity generation assets acquired by the Avenue Capital Group, the ultimate owner of EPPECI, from Globeleq Asia Holdings Limited, after Globeleq bought out the generation assets of Texas-based El Paso Global Power in India, Indonesia and the Philippines.

Elizabeth Sanchez-Lacson

PHILIPPINE STOCK EXCHANGE

(As of May 11, 2007)

52-WEEK HIGH	52-WEEK LOW	STOCKS	OPEN	HIGH	LOW	CLOSE	VOLUME
		BANKS					
17.5	5	Asiatrust Development Bank Inc.	12.25	12.25	12	12	24,800
73	42.5	Bank of the Philippine Islands	65	67	65	66.5	1,181,600
65.5	30.5	Banco de Oro Universal Bank	59.5	61	59.5	60.5	1,465,100
936	630	China Banking Corp.	900	910	900	910	2,100
20	18.18	Citystate Savings Bank	19.5	19.5	19.5	19.5	400
119	60	Equitable PCI Bank Inc.	102	104	102	104	249,170
0.63	0.36	Export and Industry Bank, Inc	0.52	0.54	0.52	0.53	1,570,000
68.5	29	Metropolitan Bank and Trust Co.	61.5	61.5	61	61.5	2,585,100
55	30.5	Philippine National Bank	46	46.5	46	46	94,400
68	38.5	Philippine Savings Bank	64	64	64	64	2,000
72	40	Philippine Bank of Communications	51	51	51	51	6,500
39.57	13.04	Rizal Commercial Banking Corp.	28.5	29.5	28	29	4,168,300
90	41	Security Bank Corp.	85	86	85	86	75,300
65.77	40.55	Union Bank of the Philippines	62	62.5	61.5	62	989,000
		OTHER FINANCIAL INSTITUTIONS					
7.7	1.5	CitisecOnline.com Inc.	6.6	6.7	6.5	6.6	317,000
0.8	0.4	First Abacus Financial Holdings Corp.	0.76	0.76	0.76	0.76	1,000,000
39	27	First Metro Investment Corp.	37.5	37.5	37.5	37.5	10,000
5	4.15	National Reinsurance Corp. of the Phils.	4.35	4.4	4.3	4.4	6,273,000
2.4	0.97	PCI Leasing and Finance Inc.	2.36	2.38	2.3	2.3	625,000
1,005.00	200	The Philippine Stock Exchange, Inc	590	590	585	585	3,220
2,260.00	1,895.00	Sun Life Financial Inc.	2,130.00	2,130.00	2,130.00	2,130.00	200
1.94	1.02	Vantage Corp.	1.86	1.88	1.81	1.88	4,718,000
		ELECTRICITY, ENERGY, POWER & WATER					
0.37	0.16	East Asia Power Resources Corp.	0.31	0.32	0.31	0.32	300,000
62.5	41	First Gen Corp.	59	59	58.5	58.5	799,800
82.5	40.5	First Phil. Holdings Corp.	76.5	76.5	75.5	75.5	765,900
12.75	6.6	Manila Water Co. Inc.	12.25	12.25	11.75	12	3,524,900
81	13	Manila Electric Co. "A"	79	80	78.5	79.5	221,000
82	20.25	Manila Electric Co. "B"	79	80	79	80	1,060,300
6.8	4.1	PNOC Energy Development Corp.	5.8	5.8	5.6	5.7	13,967,000
5.7	3.35	Petron Corp.	5.2	5.2	5.1	5.1	6,877,000
2.2	1.6	Salcon Power Corp.	2.1	2.14	2.08	2.14	21,000
1.62	0.89	Trans-Asia Oil and Energy Dev't Corp.	1.42	1.46	1.42	1.44	1,638,000
		FOOD, BEVERAGE & TOBACCO					
5	2.85	Alaska Milk Corp	4.8	4.9	4.8	4.9	173,000
2.95	1.88	Alliance Tuna International Inc.	2.16	2.16	2.16	2.16	35,000
3.4	1.24	CADP Group Corp.	1.84	1.84	1.84	1.84	4,000
28.5	19.5	Ginebra San Miguel Inc.	26	26	26	26	8,000
61	30	Jollibee Foods Corp.	53	53.5	53	53.5	203,400
1.62	0.69	RFM Corp.	1.36	1.36	1.36	1.36	46,000
4.05	2.34	Roxas Holdings	2.42	2.42	2.42	2.42	3,040,000
70.5	61	San Miguel Corp. "A"	66.5	70.5	66.5	70.5	463,800
83	68	San Miguel Corp. "B"	78.5	81	78	81	289,700
0.51	0.19	Swift Foods Inc.	0.38	0.38	0.38	0.38	10,000
4.3	2	Tanduay Holdings Inc.	4	4	4	4	26,000
23.75	15.75	Universal Robina Corp.	16.25	16.25	16	16	4,742,200
		CONSTRUCTION, INFRASTRUCTURE & ALLIED SERVICES					
5.17	1.07	EEI Corp.	4.75	4.95	4.75	4.95	4,268,000
9.2	4.2	Holcim Philippines Inc.	8.9	8.9	8.9	8.9	212,000
7.5	2.04	Philippine National Const. Corp.	5.8	5.8	5.8	5.8	13,000
2	0.245	Southeast Asia Cement Holdings Inc.	1.78	1.84	1.78	1.84	2,254,000
		CHEMICALS					
6.3	1.42	Chemrez Technologies Inc.	6.1	6.1	6	6.1	4,177,000
1.1	0.45	Interphil Laboratories Inc. "A"	0.9	0.95	0.9	0.95	220,000
1.2	0.9	Interphil Laboratories Inc. "B"	0.9	0.98	0.9	0.98	200,000
		DIVERSIFIED INDUSTRIALS					
0.43	0.06	Picop Resources Inc.	0.3	0.32	0.3	0.31	[illegible]
		HOLDING FIRMS					
4.05	1.7	A. Soriano Corp.	3.7	3.7	3.7	3.7	17,000
0.0925	0.022	AJO.net Holdings Inc.	0.07	0.0725	0.07	0.0725	4,300,000
0.78	0.17	APC Group Inc.	0.64	0.76	0.64	0.76	199,050,000
3.6	1.4	ATN Holdings Inc. "A"	1.7	1.7	1.7	1.7	20,000
0.018	0.006	Abacus Cons. Res. and Hold'gs Inc. "A"	0.011	0.012	0.011	0.012	684,400,000
0.019	0.0065	Abacus Cons. Res. and Hold'gs Inc. "B"	0.013	0.013	0.013	0.013	71,500,000
9.7	4.85	Aboitiz Equity Ventures Inc.	8.8	8.9	8.8	8.8	6,799,000
0.016	0.0065	Alcorn Gold Resources Corp.	0.013	0.013	0.013	0.013	20,000,000
7.3	3.5	Alliance Global Group Inc.	6.4	6.4	6.2	6.3	892,000
1.04	0.45	Alsons Consolidated Resources Inc.	0.79	0.79	0.79	0.79	100,000
2.26	0.83	Anglo-Philippine Holdings Corp.	2.16	2.18	2.12	2.18	6,664,000
680	327.5	Ayala Corp.	595	600	590	600	219,620
14	7.92	Bacnotan Consolidated Industries Inc.	13.75	14	13.75	13.75	168,700
6.9	0.7	Balabac Resources and Holdings Co. Inc.	4.55	4.6	4.55	4.6	92,000
4.45	0.97	Benpres Holdings Corp.	3.8	3.85	3.7	3.85	8,785,000
8.8	3.25	DMCI Holdings Inc.	8.1	8.8	8.1	8.8	5,184,000
1.3	0.7	F and J Prince Holdings Corp. "A"	1.1	1.1	1.1	1.1	15,000
6	2.55	Filinvest Development Corp.	5.2	5.2	5.1	5.2	600,000
0.42	0.13	Forum Pacific Inc.	0.28	0.28	0.28	0.28	90,000
3.55	1.14	House of Investments Inc.	2.7	2.7	2.7	2.7	10,000
14.5	5.3	JG Summit Holdings Inc.	12	12.25	12	12.25	1,347,100
0.43	0.185	MEDCO Holdings Inc.	0.36	0.36	0.36	0.36	80,000
12.5	0.88	Magnum Holdings Inc.	11.25	11.5	11	11.5	382,800
4.4	0.19	Multitech Investments Corp.	4.2	4.4	4.2	4.35	6,562,000
5.4	1.16	PAL Holdings Inc.	3.75	3.75	3.6	3.6	116,000
0.48	0.155	Prime Orion Philippines Inc.	0.44	0.44	0.44	0.44	1,640,000
1.7	1.2	Republic Glass Holdings Corp.	1.6	1.6	1.6	1.6	6,000
407.5	205	SM Investments Corp.	375	380	375	377.5	268,500
2.2	0.6	Seafront Resources Corp.	1.64	1.64	1.64	1.64	6,000
0.51	0.115	Sinophil Corp.	0.38	0.41	0.37	0.4	120,380,000
0.41	0.05	Unioil Resources and Holdings Co. Inc.	0.28	0.29	0.28	0.29	2,790,000
1.3	0.78	Vivant Corp.	1.2	1.2	1.2	1.2	7,000
0.24	0.08	Wellex Industries Inc.	0.16	0.16	0.16	0.16	30,000
0.55	0.15	Zeus Holdings Inc.	0.38	0.38	0.36	0.38	[illegible]
		PROPERTY					
2.16	0.75	A Brown Co. Inc.	1.42	1.5	1.42	1.46	3,031,000
18.75	10.25	Ayala Land Inc.	17.5	18.25	17.5	18	13,410,200
1.72	0.95	Belle Corp.	1.36	1.4	1.34	1.4	18,983,000
3.1	1.18	C and P Homes Inc.	2.5	2.65	2.5	2.6	1,760,000
4.5	1.8	Cebu Holdings Inc.	4.3	4.4	4.3	4.4	37,000
2.9	1	Cityland Development Corp.	2.4	2.4	2.4	2.4	15,000
0.54	0.24	Crown Equities Inc.	0.47	0.47	0.47	0.47	400,000
0.54	0.165	Cyber Bay Corp.	0.51	0.51	0.5	0.5	8,710,000
0.31	0.14	EIB Realty Developers Inc.	0.205	0.215	0.205	0.21	280,000
3.1	0.64	Edsa Properties Holdings Inc.	2.8	2.8	2.75	2.75	1,171,000
0.99	0.44	Empire East Land Holdings Inc.	0.75	0.78	0.77	0.78	11,780,000
0.175	0.027	Ever Gotesco Resources and Hold'gs Inc.	0.15	0.175	0.145	0.17	74,000,000
1.12	0.38	Fil-Estate Land Inc.	0.77	0.77	0.77	0.77	1,120,000
2.04	0.93	Filinvest Land Inc.	1.72	1.74	1.7	1.72	48,282,000
0.016	0.0038	Interport Resources Corp. "A"	0.011	0.011	0.011	0.011	15,000,000
1.8	0.72	Keppel Philippines Properties Inc.	1.7	1.8	1.7	1.8	105,000
0.69	0.2	Kuok Phil. Properties Inc.	0.42	0.43	0.41	0.42	14,680,000
0.99	0.18	MRC Allied Industries Inc.	0.72	0.73	0.72	0.72	1,580,000
0.034	0.011	Marsteel Consolidated Inc. "A"	0.021	0.021	0.021	0.021	7,800,000
0.036	0.012	Marsteel Consolidated Inc. "B"	0.023	0.023	0.023	0.023	500,000
3.95	1.26	Megaworld Corp.	3.5	3.7	3.5	3.65	68,488,000
6.4	1.5	Metro Pacific Investments Corp.	4.5	4.5	4.45	4.5	122,000
0.87	0.25	Philippine Realty and Holdings Corp.	0.59	0.59	0.59	0.59	190,000
23	9.6	Robinson Land Corp.	18.25	18.25	18	18	1,064,500
6	1.48	SM Development Corp.	5	5.1	4.95	5.1	5,045,000
13	6.9	SM Prime Holdings Inc.	12	12.25	11.75	12	21,417,000
0.98	0.51	Suntrust Home Developers Inc.	0.69	0.72	0.69	0.71	1,680,000
0.27	0.06	Uniwide Holdings Inc.	0.19	0.205	0.19	0.2	5,320,000
1.74	0.3	[illegible] Holdings Inc.	1.34	1.48	1.32	1.44	[illegible]
		MEDIA					
31.5	13.5	ABS-CBN Broadcasting Corp.	31.5	31.5	30.5	31.5	317,100
1.2	0.97	Manila Bulletin Publishing Corp.	1.04	1.04	1.04	1.04	13,000
		TELECOMMUNICATIONS					
2.12	1.1	Digital Telecommunications Phils. Inc.	1.66	1.68	1.66	1.66	2,800,000
1,445.00	820	Globe Telecom Inc.	1,365.00	1,365.00	1,345.00	1,350.00	54,620
2,820.00	1,700.00	Phil. Long Distance Telephone Co.	2,555.00	2,555.00	2,540.00	2,550.00	114,550
7.9	3.1	Pilipino Telephone Corp.	6.7	6.7	6.6	6.7	[illegible]
		INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY					
0.39	0.155	Boulevard Holdings Inc.	0.25	0.26	0.25	0.26	8,310,000
9	2	Diversified Financial Network Inc.	8.2	8.3	7.8	7.8	865,000
7.6	2	IPVG Corp.	6.8	6.9	6.8	6.9	1,067,000
0.075	0.046	ISM Communications Corp.	0.0625	0.0625	0.0625	0.0625	2,400,000
0.033	0.011	Imperial Resources Inc. "A"	0.026	0.026	0.026	0.026	5,000,000
0.0575	0.038	Island Information and Technology Inc.	0.0575	0.06	0.0575	0.06	3,100,000
0.06	0.025	PhilWeb.Com Inc.	0.049	0.049	0.046	0.049	106,000,000
5.8	1	Transpacific Broadband Group Int'l. Inc.	2.16	2.76	2.08	2.1	1,963,000
		TRANSPORTATION SERVICES					
1.68	1.14	Aboitiz Transport System Corp.	1.52	1.52	1.52	1.52	500,000
6.8	2.5	Asian Terminals Inc.	6.3	6.5	6.3	6.5	184,000
32	12.5	Int'l Container Terminal Services Inc.	27	28.5	26.5	28.5	3,056,800
2.14	0.86	Keppel Philippines Marine Inc.	1.92	2	1.92	2	[illegible]
		HOTEL & LEISURE					
4.25	1.26	Leisure and Resorts World Corp.	4.05	4.1	4.05	4.1	2,333,000
0.52	0.18	Premiere Entertainment Productions Inc.	0.42	0.52	0.42	0.49	47,870,000
1.2	0.42	Waterfront Philippines Inc.	0.96	0.99	0.96	0.98	[illegible]
		DIVERSIFIED SERVICES					
4.35	1.84	Macroasia Corp.	3.9	3.95	3.9	3.95	1,136,000
16	13	Pacific Online Systems Corp.	14	15.25	14	15	3,666,900
30	9.5	Paxys Inc.	27	27.5	27	27.5	[illegible]
		MINING					
0.018	0.007	Abra Mining and Industrial Corp.	0.012	0.012	0.011	0.012	393,900,000
7.8	2.6	Apex Mining Co. Inc. "A"	6.4	6.6	6.4	6.6	2,053,000
7.7	2.55	Apex Mining Co. Inc. "B"	6.6	6.8	6.6	6.8	619,000
20.5	5.6	Atlas Cons. Mining and Dev't Corp.	19.5	20	19.5	20	5,116,200
14.75	8.7	Benguet Corp. "A"	12.5	13	12.5	13	92,200
4	1.62	Dizon Copper Silver Mines Inc.	2.5	2.5	2.5	2.5	22,000
2.12	0.0502	GEOGRACE Resources Philippines Inc.	2.04	2.12	2.02	2.12	37,946,000
0.42	0.215	Lepanto Consolidated Mining Co. "A"	0.3	0.3	0.3	0.3	3,110,000
0.47	0.225	Lepanto Consolidated Mining Co. "B"	0.34	0.34	0.34	0.34	1,510,000
0.037	0.0154	Manila Mining Corp. "A"	0.035	0.036	0.035	0.036	230,300,000
0.039	0.017	Manila Mining Corp. "B"	0.037	0.038	0.037	0.038	270,700,000
0.024	0.0075	Omico Corp.	0.02	0.02	0.019	0.02	315,500,000
5.9	2.65	Philex Mining Corp.	5.2	5.4	5.1	5.3	13,575,000
32	14.75	Semirara Mining Corp.	28	28.5	27.5	28.5	1,503,700
0.87	0.25	United Paragon Mining Corp.	0.78	0.8	0.78	0.79	1,230,000
1.8	0.41	Vulcan Industrial and Mining Corp.	1.46	1.52	1.44	1.44	25,414,000
		OIL					
0.58	0.23	Basic Consolidated Inc.	0.35	0.37	0.35	0.37	18,020,000
0.017	0.008	Oriental Pet. and Minerals Corp. "A"	0.016	0.017	0.016	0.017	484,200,000
0.019	0.009	Oriental Pet. and Minerals Corp. "B"	0.018	0.018	0.018	0.018	5,000,000
14.81	9	Petroenergy Resources Corp.	10.25	10.25	10	10	32,900
0.0182	0.0089	The Philodrill Corp.	0.016	0.017	0.016	0.017	275,300,000

BY INQUIRER RESEARCH

SOURCE: TECHNISTOCK

CURRENCIES

May 11, 2007 Country	Unit	Euro Equivalent	Dollar Equivalent	Peso Equivalent
United States	Dollar	0.741455	1.000000	47.1920
Japan	Yen	0.006182	0.008337	0.3934
United Kingdom	Pound	1.467784	1.979600	93.4213
Hong Kong	Dollar	0.094811	0.127872	6.0345
Switzerland	Franc	0.607850	0.819807	38.6883
Canada	Dollar	0.667436	0.900171	42.4809
Singapore	Dollar	0.488345	0.658631	31.0821
Australia	Dollar	0.616646	0.831670	39.2482
Bahrain	Dinar*	1.966828	2.652661	125.1844
Saudi Arabia	Rial	0.197710	0.266652	12.5838
Brunei	Dollar	0.486743	0.656470	30.9801
Indonesia	Rupiah	0.000085	0.000114	0.0054
Thailand	Baht	0.022884	0.030864	1.4565
UAE	Dirham	0.201927	0.272339	12.8522
Euro	Euro	1.000000	1.348700	63.6479
Korea	Won	0.000802	0.001082	0.0511
China	Yuan**	0.096373	0.129978	6.1339
Argentina	Peso	0.240928	0.324939	15.3345
Brazil	Real	0.367712	0.495933	23.4041
Denmark	Kroner	0.134163	0.180946	8.5392
India	Rupee	0.018066	0.024366	1.1499
Malaysia	Ringgit	0.218075	0.294118	13.8800
Mexico	New Peso	0.068401	0.092253	4.3536
New Zealand	Dollar	0.542753	0.732011	34.5451
Norway	Kroner	0.122368	0.165038	7.7885
Pakistan	Rupee	0.012250	0.016521	0.7797
South Africa	Rand	0.106592	0.143761	6.7844
Sweden	Kroner	0.108294	0.146056	6.8927
Syria	Pound	0.014283	0.019264	0.9091
Taiwan	NT Dollar	0.022258	0.030020	1.4167
Venezuela	Bolivar	0.000346	0.000466	0.0220

Source: Reuters' forex closing prices as of NY time—May 10, 2007

* Various banks in Bahrain as quoted in Reuters' Screen.

** Asian time closing rate as of May 10, 2007

Surging oil prices widen US trade deficit to $64B

March trade gap reported to be highest in 6 months

WASHINGTON—THE US TRADE deficit jumped to a six-month high of $63.9 billion in March as rising oil import prices more than offset stronger exports to China, the Commerce Department reported Thursday.

The March trade gap sharply exceeded analyst forecasts of $60 billion, raising fresh concerns about the gap's drag on the US economy. It was the widest since September 2006 and rose from $57.9 billion in February.

The politically sensitive US trade gap with China narrowed by 6.4 percent to $17.2 billion, compared with $18.4 billion in February.

Exports to China in March hit a new record high of $5.5 billion. Imports from the Asian powerhouse were at their lowest level since May 2006, at $22.7 billion.

China, by far the heavyweight in the US trade deficit, is under fire from US officials, industry and labor unions, who accuse Beijing of keeping its currency, the yuan, artificially low to make exports unfairly competitive.

Senator Charles Schumer, chairman of the Joint Economic Committee, called on President George W. Bush's administration to seriously tackle the trade unbalance and get tough on China.

"This administration needs to clamp down on high deficits and, in particular, force China to play fairly when it comes to currency valuation and free access to economic markets," the New York Democrat said.

However, US Treasury Secretary Henry Paulson said that long-term structural imbalances were the biggest driver of the large deficit with China.

"Most of their growth is driven by exports and there's not a big enough domestic consumption portion to their growth," Paulson told CBNC television.

Analysts estimated the March data would cost half a point in first-quarter economic growth.

Marie-Pierre Ripert, economist at IXIS Corporate and Investment Bank, said first-quarter gross domestic product growth "is likely to be revised significantly downward" to 0.8 percent from the tepid 1.3 percent officially estimated last month.

Peter Morici, a University of Maryland economist, pointed out that the monthly trade gap had shot up 140 percent since December 2001.

"Each dollar spent on imports, not matched by a dollar of exports, shifts workers into activities where productivity is lower and reduces domestic demand and employment," he said.

The trade shortfall grew 10.4 percent from the previous month, the sharpest monthly change in the trade picture since September 2005.

In March, imports surged 4.5 percent to $190.1 billion, their highest level since August 2006. Exports increased 1.8 percent to $126.2 billion, the highest point since January.

Rising oil prices helped tip the trade balance of the world's biggest energy consumer.

Import volume in March included a $2.03-billion rise in crude oil imports, mainly due to a rise in the price, to $53 per barrel in March from $50.71 in February.

The volume of imported oil shot up to 324 million barrels, from 253 million in February.

The National Association of Manufacturers pointed to "encouraging nuggets" in the report, saying the rise in the deficit was due to higher oil prices but that manufacturing exports were up 10 percent from a year earlier.

Auto imports also widened the gap, rising $909 billion in March. *AFP*

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HIGH gas prices are posted at a Shell gas station in San Francisco. Gasoline prices in the US are poised to break records at the pump. AP

Asia stocks fall on rising concerns over US economy

SINGAPORE—ASIAN STOCKS from tech exporters such as Sony to US-exposed mall operator Westfield dipped on Friday after disappointing US retail sales fueled concerns about the outlook for Asia's biggest overseas market.

Chinese shares—which have hit records as retail investors have piled in, ignoring warnings that stocks have risen too far—were among the leading losers.

Investors turned cautious, helping Japanese government bonds gain traction, mindful that a reversal might trigger a global sell-off similar to one in late-February that hit global markets.

After the steepest fall in US stocks in two months and declines in most Asian markets, financial bookmakers predicted European markets would open lower, calling the FTSE 100 down around 25 points.

Some currency investors were more sanguine, seeing the equity decline as a market correcting itself after having run up too far, too fast.

Falls in economically sensitive stocks, such as technology companies Canon Inc. and Sony Corp., helped drive the Nikkei down 1 percent. The index was also pressured by a steep fall in shares in Casio Computer Co. on a downbeat forecast and broker downgrades.

By 0630 GMT, the Shanghai Composite Index was down 0.4 percent. The benchmark has risen more than 50 percent this year.

In Hong Kong the Hang Seng was off 1 percent.

Australia's S&P/ASX 200 fell 0.9 percent, dragged lower by banks and companies with US earnings, among them shopping mall operator Westfield Group.

But South Korea's benchmark KOSPI's recovered to notch a record closing high with a gain of 0.2 percent, aided by a 14 percent jump in Hyundai Steel Co. after it said it signed a contract to secure iron ore.

MSCI's measure of Asia Pacific stocks, excluding Japan, slipped 0.8 percent, a day after hitting a record closing high. *Reuters*

OxyContin maker, 3 others plead guilty

ROANOKE, VIRGINIA—THE maker of the powerful painkiller OxyContin and three of its current and former executives have pleaded guilty to misleading the public about the drug's risk of addiction, a federal prosecutor and the company said.

Purdue Pharma L.P., its president, top lawyer and former chief medical officer will pay $634.5 million in fines for claiming the drug was less addictive and less subject to abuse than other pain medications, US Attorney John Brownlee said Thursday.

The plea agreement settled a national case and came two days after the Stamford, Conn.-based company agreed to pay $19.5 million to 26 states and Washington, DC, to settle complaints that it encouraged physicians to overprescribe OxyContin.

"With its OxyContin, Purdue unleashed a highly abusable, addictive, and potentially dangerous drug on an unsuspecting and unknowing public," Brownlee said. "For these misrepresentations and crimes, Purdue and its executives have been brought to justice."

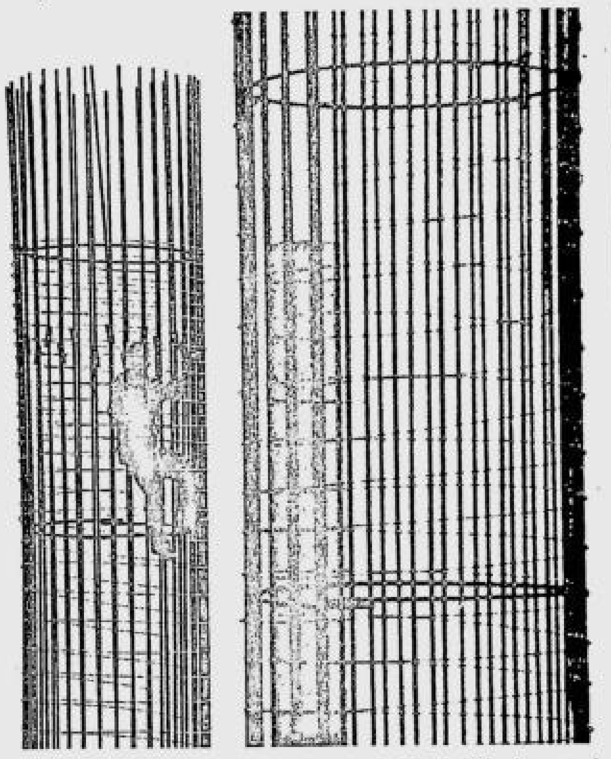
Purdue spokesman James Heins objected to any suggestion of ties between the plea agreement and the abuse of OxyContin.

"We promoted the medicine only to health-care professionals, not to consumers," he said in a statement.

Privately held Purdue learned from focus groups with physicians in 1995 that doctors were worried about the abuse potential of OxyContin. The company then gave false information to its sales representatives that the drug had less potential for addiction and abuse than other painkillers, the US attorney said.

Ken Jost of the Justice Department's Office of Consumer Litigation said this case should put pharmaceutical companies on notice that they won't be able to get away with breaking the law to make a profit.

Purdue Pharma said it accepted responsibility for its employees' actions. *AP*



A LABORER works at a construction site in Hefei. China's central bank vowed to use open market operations and higher bank reserve requirements to mop up excess liquidity and prevent the world's fourth-largest economy from overheating. REUTERS

China's April trade surplus nears $17B

BEIJING—CHINA'S MONTHLY trade surplus more than doubled in April to nearly $17 billion, the government said Friday, adding to pressure on Beijing ahead of closely watched talks with Washington on its swollen trade gap.

The April trade gap of $16.88 billion (euro12.55 billion) was below February's $23.7 billion—the second-highest level on record—but in line with steady increases in monthly trade surpluses over the past year.

Chinese and US trade envoys are due to meet May 23-24 in Washington for talks on Beijing's surpluses, currency controls, product piracy and other contentious issues.

Some US lawmakers are pushing for punitive tariffs on imports of Chinese goods if Beijing fails to ease currency controls that critics say keep its currency undervalued, giving exporters an unfair price advantage and adding to China's trade surpluses.

The Chinese government say it is not actively pursuing such large surpluses and has taken steps to rein in exports.

Exports in April rose 26.8 percent, while imports rose 21.3 percent, the General Administration of Customs said.

The government reported a monthly trade surplus of just $6.9 billion in March.

Economists had projected a sharp jump in the trade surplus from March to April.

They said the February surge was caused by exporters shipping more goods early to beat an expected change in taxes, leaving less to ship in March.

The April figure raised the country's accumulated trade surplus so far this year to $63 billion, the customs agency said.

China reported a global trade surplus in 2006 of $177.5 billion.

Last year, the United States reported a record $232.5 billion trade deficit with China. China's gap with the United States is bigger than its global surplus because it runs deficits with other countries. *AP*

Greenspan sees one-third chance of US recession

SINGAPORE—FORMER US FEDeral Reserve Chairman Alan Greenspan said on Friday he still believed there was a one-third chance that the US economy would slip into recession this year, reiterating a statement made in March.

Greenspan shook markets in February when he said it was possible the US economy might fall into recession by the end of the year. He later said he saw a one-third chance of a recession.

"My arithmetic says if there's a one-third probability of a recession, then there's a two-thirds probability there won't be a recession," Greenspan told a closed-door Merrill Lynch investor forum, according to an official at the US investment bank.

The United States economy grew at a tepid 1.3 percent annualized rate in the first quarter -- the weakest pace in four years.

Greenspan said he had not changed his view on the health of the world's biggest economy but conceded that some might say he had changed his mind, the official quoted him as saying.

Greenspan spoke via a satellite link from Washington. His remarks contrast with those of Ben Bernanke, the Fed's chairman, who has played down the risk of a recession.

Commenting on the strength of the Chinese currency, the yuan or renminbi, Greenspan said China, the world's fourth-largest economy, would bear the brunt of its artificially weak currency and that money supply was growing too rapidly.

"It's in China's self-interest to allow the renminbi to move up faster," he was quoted as saying.

"There is an undue fear of allowing the exchange rate to rise. It's a mistake not allowing it to rise."

Greenspan said he doubted that unemployment would rise in China, should a stronger currency hit exports, adding that the country's labour market was "very sophisticated".

He said the impact of any slowdown in the US economy on Southeast Asia would be mitigated by high savings rates and domestic consumption.

"Any slowdown will be somewhat offset," Greenspan said, adding that he saw no repeat of the 1997 Asian financial crisis due to strengthened central bank foreign currency reserves.

"The chance of '97 happening again is virtually non-existent." The fundamental reason for the yen carry trade -- borrowing the low-yielding currency to invest in high-yielding assets in other currencies -- was ultra-low Japanese interest rates, he said.

GREENSPAN

"The yen carry trade is not an economic phenomenon, it is a cultural phenomenon. Why is it that the 10-year JGB (Japanese Government Bond) is yielding 1.6 percent, significantly less than anywhere else in the world?" Greenspan said towards the end of his address, when reporters were able to access the forum.

Greenspan has previously said he takes great care not to comment directly on monetary policy, but that making economic predictions is fair.

The US Federal Reserve held interest rates steady at 5.25 percent on Wednesday and stuck to a forecast of steady growth despite signs of economic weakness.

Analysts expect a rate cut may be in store later this year, although the Fed remains focused on price pressures due to worries that the tight labor market could fuel inflation. *Reuters*

Central banks warn of inflation

FRANKFURT—INFLATION WARNings from the world's leading central banks, and British interest rates raised to their highest level in six years on Thursday, highlighted a global economy where monetary tightening is not yet over.

The Bank of England raised to 5.5 percent and warned rates could head even higher in an economy running at full pelt, with house prices soaring and inflation way above its 2 percent target. Capacity constraints meant that price risks were on the upside further out, the BoE said.

In the world's second largest economic region, the European Central Bank as expected held rates steady and flagged plans for a quarter point hike in June to 4 percent by saying that "strong vigilance" over inflationary risks is essential.

More significant perhaps was that ECB President Jean-Claude Trichet gave no hint that 4 percent would mark a peak in ECB rate hikes—despite a strong euro currency which some analysts say could deliver sufficient tightening for the euro zone.

In Asia, China also served notice that it would keep on tightening monetary policy to mop up excess liquidity and stop the world's fourth largest economy from boiling over.

"China needs to prevent the economy from shifting from a state of overly rapid growth to one of overheating and to avoid big ups and downs," it said in its monetary policy report.

Beijing gave no indication, however, that it would allow the yuan currency to appreciate at a faster pace in order to slow its export-driven growth. Already China has raised its rates three times in the past year.

In Japan, Governor Toshihiko Fukui expressed discomfort with a key rate at 0.5 percent. He said the Bank of Japan would move cautiously in adjusting rates and that keeping them too low for too long would contribute to an excessive buildup of cheap borrowing in yen by global investors.

These warnings poured forth a day after the US Federal Reserve disappointed some market expectations that the world's top central banker would row back a little on its inflationary vigilance in the face of softening US economic growth.

The Fed kept rates at 5.25 percent as expected on Wednesday, a level they have held for the past 11 months. But it tweaked its policy language slightly to underscore that core inflation remains somewhat worrisome and inflation still is its primary policy concern. *Reuters*

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Cebu's trendsetter

AFTER ONE YEAR OF LEGENDARY WELCOMES and celebrations, Cebu's finest Marco Polo Plaza up on Nivel Hills stands astute beaming in grandeur, truly a well-acknowledged landmark of the Queen City of the South. The 329 well-appointed suites and guestrooms of this premiere world-class urban hotel, each is an ideal refuge with magnificent panorama of Cebu's sprawling greens and the city's neighboring picturesque islands embraced by serene blue waters. Its lavishly dressed Lobby leads to a Scenic Elevator where one gets a breathtaking vista of the city. Atop the 23-storey tower is the lavishly-styled Continental Club with private reception area, lounge, and library, exclusive mini business center and boardroom, and an al fresco dining area. By the first level, is the famous Café Marco beaming with a plethora of sumptuous east-west flavors and array of heavenly beverages which opens up to a Pool Bar and Gym.

Cebu City's finest Marco Polo Plaza Cebu unveiled its most elegant and grandiose form in a sensational celebration marking its first year in the market as the premier destination in the Queen City of the South. As a fitting tribute, the dynamic triumvirate headed by nonpareil Asia Pacific Top Management Resources Corp and Marco Polo Plaza Cebu chair Alfred V. Ty, visionary Marco Polo Plaza president Rey Villar, and hardworking general manager Hans Hauri, honored corporate and travel trade colleagues for their paramount support in making Marco Polo a well-acknowledged landmark in Cebu.

The Marco Polo management team led by marketing consultant Lynn Romero, director of sales Vicky Magsino and PR manager Carlo Borromeo pooled resources and filled up the lavishly dressed lobby and Cebu Grand Ballroom with guests composed of political, social, and financial giants who were enthralled with how Marco Polo was transformed into a beautiful urban resort hotel up on the Nivel Hills. Guests were delighted with the buffet table beaming with heavenly feast that included Cebu's well-praised lechon, a plethora of fresh seafood, roasted lamb, medley of pasta, an assortment of sweets and pastries. After a year of celebrating significant contributions to Cebu's booming tourism industry, the Marco Polo team is aimed at proving its guests diverse options for entertainment, dining and recreation as the hotel management and working staff continues to extend its warm hospitality to everyone.

Guests are completely pampered with excellent and friendly services, a true Cebuaño trademark, which is why Marco Polo Plaza Cebu is fast becoming the talk of town and ideal venue for intimate parties, gatherings, and conventions. This month, the Marco Polo Plaza Cebu becomes the one-stop destination for brides and grooms-to-be as it brings together the city's best wedding professionals in a bridal fair titled "Weddings at the Marco Polo Plaza." The top designers, stylists, florists, and photographers congregate at the Cebu Grand Ballroom on May 19 and 20, while Wedding Essentials magazine shares tips on make-up, wedding etiquette, and event planning. On the evenings of both dates, the fair will culminate in fashion shows featuring the latest wedding collections from the Fashion Council of Cebu: Jun Escario, Minnie Yuviengco, Albert Arriba, Arcy Gayatin, Felix Yu, Oj Hofer, Ditas Rodriguez, and Philip Rodriguez. Couples-to-be who book their wedding at the event get a chance to win prizes.

The hotel has special packages such as the Summer Barkada Package, where one may take two of his friends and live it up in style in the Queen City of the South by savoring the view from a deluxe room, swim to one's delight, enjoy a complimentary gourmet pizza and a chilled pitcher of beer at the Pool Bar. The package also offers free buffet breakfast for three at Café Marco, and a free use of the hotel's gym, plus a 10 percent discount on lunch or dinner buffet and spa services. The promo is valid up to June 15, 2007.

Meanwhile, the Marco Polo Plaza Weekender, is an affordable two-night package valid Fridays to Sundays. One can enjoy the view of the mountains or the sea at his well-appointed accommodations, take a relaxing dip in the hotel's famous mango-shaped swimming pool, and work up a sweat in the modern fitness center. The package includes two buffet breakfasts at the popular Café Marco, free meals for two children aged 6 years and below, and a 50 percent discount for those aged 7 to 12 years. Included in the package are welcome drinks, late check-out, and a coupon worth P1,500 redeemable at any of the hotel's outlets.

For reservations and inquiries, call (02) 887-1263/ (02) 759-5207 in Manila, (032) 253-1111 loc. 8220 in Cebu, or 8888-168 toll-free.

MARCO
PLAZA

MARCO Polo Plaza Cebu GM Hans Hauri, MPP chair Alfred Ty, VP for operations John Berndt, First Metro Investment Corp president Fransisco Sebastian, Metrobank chair Tony Abacan, and Marco Polo Plaza Cebu president Rey Villar.

Show your love on Mother's Day at Astoria Plaza

A MOM'S TENDER LOVE, HER JOY AND COMPANY touches every heart. For all that she does and all that she is, the entire family can thank and surprise her with a comforting getaway within the undisturbed charm of Astoria Plaza. Make this Mother's Day a time she will cherish for years to come with a weekend escape where everything she needs is right at her fingertips.

Offering quiet, spacious rooms, the Mother's Day package is available from May 11-13, for only P5,000 net per night for a 1-bedroom suite and P7,600 net per night for a 2-bedroom suite.

Her cheerful relaxation will be enhanced with complimentary breakfast for two, a special day at Stresscape spa perfect for relieving stress and easing tension, and a surprise token from Coppertone. The whole family will enjoy the finest services with all the comforts and facilities, together with the lady of the house.

Astoria Plaza is located at 15 J. Escriva Drive (formerly Amber Avenue); Ortigas Business District, Pasig City.

For inquiries and reservations, call 687-1111, or log on to www.astoriaplaza.com.

Astoria Plaza is managed by Genesis Hotels and Resorts Corp.

Mother's Day at Dusit Hotel

SURPRISE MOM ON MOTHER'S DAY AT Dusit Hotel Nikko and spice up her day!

Dusit Hotel Nikko's Asian specialty restaurants have created special menus for that perfect mom. Savor the sumptuous dinner setmenus prepared by the hotel's seasoned chefs at Benjarong Thai restaurant and Thien Duong Vietnamese Restaurant.

If you're a buffet buff, the The Café and Benkay is the right place to be. For only P650++ per person, guests dining at the Café will enjoy among others, the 'RST' (Roast US Angus Beef, Sashimi, Sushi and Tempura) buffet. Benkay offers families every weekend a buffet spread of favorite Japanese dishes for only P995 ++ per person.

Fiesta San Miguel lets you truly enjoy family bonding on Mother's Day with the restaurant's 'Best of the Best' food offering. Best of the Best is a complete bunch of Fiesta San Miguel's bestsellers, with servings good for 2 to 3 persons and priced at P750.00 nett.

For Italian cuisine lovers, diners may sample the rich dishes of Tosca - the hotel's newest Italian restaurant.

Mothers dining and availing of the Mother's Day specials on May 13 will receive a personal size Choco-Mango cake and a copy of Total Woman Magazine. A lucky mother will receive a gift certificate for 3 days and 2 nights stay at Waling-Waling beach resort.

For inquiries and reservations, please call 867-3333.

Happy Mother's Day

Summer spree at Somerset

THIS MAY, IT IS NEVER TOO LATE TO SPEND THE remaining days of summer relaxed, refreshed and revitalized. Go on a Summer Spree at Somerset with family and friends. This special package covers three days and two nights of summer bliss that includes the following: one hour Swedish or Shiatsu massage for two, movie tickets in Greenbelt and Ayala Malls theaters, buffet breakfast and special discounts on local calls and laundry service. Special rates as low as USD 160/P8,320 for a Studio Executive Room. Guests can also avail of deluxe accommodations that include spacious 1 Bedroom and 2 Bedroom units equipped with entertainment, dining and kitchen facilities. This promo will run until the end of the month and available at three Somerset locations: Somerset Millennium, Somerset Olympia and Somerset Salcedo. All three properties are conveniently located in Makati City. For inquiries and reservations, you may contact Somerset's Central Reservations Office at 750 3211-14, or e-mail enquiry.manila@the-ascott.com. Ascott International is the largest global serviced residence operator in Asia Pacific, Europe and the Gulf Region. It manages the Ascott, Somerset and Citadines brands in over 40 cities across 21 countries. For more information on Somerset Serviced Residence, Philippines and other Ascott properties, visit www.the-ascott.com.

RP firms emerge as world's top energy cost managers

By Abigail L. Ho

COMPANIES DOING BUSINESS in the Philippines have always complained about the high cost of electricity in the country.

Their complaints are not without basis, too, as power rates here are second only to Japan.

But instead of just complaining and waiting for a miracle to happen (like power rates suddenly plunging), Philippine companies have decided to do something about the problem by becoming the best energy cost managers in the world.

Grant Thornton International, an organization of independently owned and managed accounting and consulting firms, has laid down six criteria to determine which countries in the world are the best managers of their energy costs.

These criteria include conducting an energy review, reducing energy consumption, switching off IT and electrical equipment when not in use, investing in energy-saving equipment, investigating alternative energy sources, and considering relocation.

In three of these six criteria, the Philippines has emerged at the head of the pack.

According to the organization's latest International Business Report (IBR), four of five Philippine businesses have undertaken an "energy review" to understand where they may be wasting energy.

This percentage, which is way above the global average of 58 percent, places the country in front of the 31 economies that participated in the survey.

East Asia leads

At the regional level, East Asian countries, which include the Philippines, lead in this department, registering a 70-percent average, as compared with 56 percent for European Union member-nations and 47 percent for businesses in the North American Free Trade Agreement (Nafta)-covered countries.

Energy conservation has also become top priority for businesses in the Philippines, with 85 percent of local survey respondents saying they have taken steps to reduce energy consumption.

Again, this is much higher than the 59-percent worldwide average, and enough to make the Philippines top the category.

As with the first criteria, East Asian countries are also the leaders in the energy conservation department, with 64 percent of respondents in the region saying they have brought their energy usage down.

Businesses in the EU and Nafta countries are closer to the global average, with averages of 53 percent and 57 percent, respectively.

Cost pressures

"Businesses in the Philippines appear to be in the best position to manage their energy costs for the future. They have scored highest in three out of the six factors and appear to have put the most measures into place to manage their energy costs," the IBR states.

"Given that businesses in the Philippines were the most prominent in citing energy as having a major impact on costs, this does not come as a surprise," the report further says.

According to the report, businesses in the Philippines, Botswana, Germany, Thailand and Mexico are most likely to say that energy costs impact greatly on their overall costs.

Here in the Philippines, 68 percent of businesses—the highest among all surveyed economies—consider energy costs as a huge threat to profitability.

As a result, the Philippines, together with Malaysia and Germany, are among the world's best energy managers.

"They seem to not only have recognized the issue, but have also done something about it by continuously putting measures in place to manage these costs," the report states.

On the other hand, companies in Australia, Hong Kong, Brazil, New Zealand and Singapore believe energy is not a major driver on their cost pressures.

High awareness level

Greg Navarro, managing partner at Grant Thornton International Philippine member Punongbayan and Araullo, says the high level of awareness that Philippine businesses have of how energy costs impact on their bottom line as well as on the environment is a key factor in making the country the best energy cost manager in the world.

"The social climate in the Philippines inspires businesses to action. Here, educational institutions and an active (nongovernment organization) network constantly promote environmental awareness, while both private and public sectors continue to drum up support for research on alternative sources of energy," he says.

"The government itself works hard toward energy independence, for the development of non-oil energy sources, and the efficient management of oil prices in the market. And, of course, companies have recognized that energy costs—even more than staff costs or property costs—can, in fact, significantly hurt their finances," he adds.

In the future, should energy costs continue to rise, Philippine businesses are already well equipped to cope with these cost pressures.

This is not to say, however, that they will stop complaining about high energy costs. They will just continue to do something about it.

Management of energy and environmental issues league table*

Philippines	410
Brazil	360
Mainland China	341
Malaysia	307
Germany	306
Turkey	303
Poland	298
Hong Kong	292
Mexico	283
India	282
Armenia	271
UK	258
Ireland	253
Spain	248
Greece	243
Italy	235
Australia	233
Canada	233
South Africa	230
US	229
Russia	223
Netherlands	217
Luxembourg	214
Argentina	213
New Zealand	212
Sweden	208
Taiwan	207
Japan	205
Botswana	191
France	186
Thailand	178
Singapore	143

Source: Grant Thornton International Business Report (IBR) 2007

Major impacts on businesses cost pressures (%)

Energy costs		Raw materials	
Philippines	68	Spain	61
Botswana	65	Botswana	60
Germany	58	Singapore	60
Thailand	55	Thailand	56
Mexico	55	France	56
Turkey	52	Mexico	55
Ireland	47	Philippines	55
France	44	Armenia	54
Luxembourg	44	South Africa	53
Italy	44	Italy	53
Poland	43	Malaysia	52
Japan	43	Taiwan	52
Armenia	42	Germany	51
India	42	Japan	51
Russia	41	Mainland China	50
Argentina	40	Turkey	48
UK	40	India	48
Malaysia	39	Argentina	45
South Africa	38	Poland	44
Canada	35	Australia	44
Spain	34	Brazil	42
Sweden	32	Luxembourg	41
US	32	Hong Kong	40
Netherlands	31	Ireland	39
Taiwan	29	Greece	38
Greece	28	Russia	36
Mainland China	28	Canada	34
Singapore	25	New Zealand	34
New Zealand	25	Sweden	31
Brazil	23	UK	31
Hong Kong	23	US	31
Australia	18	Netherlands	29

Source: Grant Thornton International Business Report (IBR) 2007

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Any person with valid objection/s on the above-mentioned project may file his/her objection in writing, under oath, with the BOI within three (3) days from the date of this publication.

(Sgd.) **RUDY B. CAÑA**
Director
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(PDI–May 12, 2007)

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Obrero, Davao City

NOTICE OF SEARCH AND CALL FOR APPLICATIONS

The Board of Regents of the University of Southeastern Philippines formally and publicly announces that the Search for Presidency of the **UNIVERSITY OF SOUTHEASTERN PHILIPPINES** is now open. Interested applicants and/or nominees are invited to send their formal applications to the Search Committee chaired by Commissioner Saturnino M. Ocampo, Jr.

MINIMUM QUALIFICATIONS:

- Must be a Natural-born Filipino citizen;
- A holder of an earned doctorate degree;
- Preferably not more than 61 years old upon assumption to office;
- Must have a proven leadership and managerial skills within the purview of the university's mission, vision and goals; and
- Must have at least five (5) years of administrative experience.

In addition to the above-mentioned qualifications, the applicants are required to submit the following clearances:

- National Bureau of Investigation Clearance; and
- Ombudsman Clearance.

Formal application addressed to the Search Committee should be accompanied with:

- Detailed Curriculum Vitae and authenticated/certified supporting documents;
- The applicants proposed Vision and Thrust for the University;
- Result of Psychological Testing accomplished by an accredited Test Center; and
- Result of the Drug Testing conducted by a government accredited Test Center.

Interested applicants and/or those nominated for the position are requested to submit eight (8) sets of their formal application and certified supporting documents on or before **June 4, 2007** to:

MARLON RUBEN N. FABRICANTE
Executive Assistant IV
Office of Commissioner Saturnino M. Ocampo, Jr.
CHED, 5/F DAP Bldg., San Miguel Avenue,
Origas Center, Pasig City
Tel. No. (02) 636-1690
Telefax No. (02) 636-1693

OR

DR. SUSAN F. LABUTAP
University/Board Secretary
University of Southeastern Philippines
Obrero, 8000 Davao City
Tel. No. (082) 225-4696
Telefax No. (082) 221-7737

(PDI - May 4, 9 & 12, 2007)

OBITUARIES

Salvacion Gantioqui Limjuco

of Arayat, Pampanga & San Juan, Metro Manila

passed away in the Grace of our Lord on May 9, 2007 at the age of 83.

Her bereaved children & children-in-law: **Teet & Francis Regalado, Sylvia & Boy Tan, Boy & Bingle Hizon, Ronald & Mel Orbizo, Melin & Lito Gan, Me-Anne & Art Rafael**; grandchildren, great-granddaughter; sisters: **Lucing, Nena, Dely** & other relatives request your prayers for the eternal repose of her soul.

Her body lies in state at Santuario de San Jose, Greenhills, San Juan, Metro Manila.

Interment will be on Sunday, May 13, 2007 at the Loyola Memorial Park, Marikina City after the 1:00 p.m. Mass.

ATTY. VICTORIANO V. CRUZ

of Angat & Baliuag, Bulacan
and Xavierville III, Quezon City

peacefully joined our Creator on Wednesday, 9th of May 2007 at the age of 93.

His loving children Edgardo & Cesar, relatives & friends request the pious readers to pray for the eternal repose of his soul.

His remains lie in state at the Arlington Memorial Chapels, Inc., 12 G. Araneta Ave., Quezon City. Interment will be on Sunday, 13th of May 2007 at the Loyola Memorial Park, Marikina City after the 8:00 a.m. Mass.

OBITUARIES

MARIA LUISA "Aloy" CONTY MARELLA

passed away in the Grace of our Lord on May 8, 2007 in Rancho Cucamonga, California, USA

Her loving family, other relatives and friends request the pious readers to pray for the eternal repose of her soul.

Interment will be on May 19, 2007 at the Forest Lawn Covina Hills, California, USA.

SIMONA C. ALIKPALA, M.D.

October 28, 1916 – May 11, 2007

UP College of Medicine Class 1940
Philippine Pediatric Society, Past President (1972 – 1974)
Chairman, UERMMMC-Department of Pediatrics (1972 – 1979)
Outstanding Pediatrician, PPS (1981) and Asia (1997)

Her siblings, **Rosario** (†) & **Agapito** (†), **Federico** (†) & **Julieta** (†), **Eleuterio, Jr. & Basil, Ernesto, Edilberto & Asuncion, Exequiel & Doris** and her bereaved nephews, nieces, grandchildren, other relatives and friends request the pious readers to pray for the eternal repose of her soul.

Her remains lie in state at the Sta. Rita de Casçia Parish in PhilAm Homes in South Lawin, Quezon City.

Interment will be announced later.

In lieu of flowers, donations may be made to **SIMONA C. ALIKPALA, M.D. Professorial Chair in Pediatrics at UERMMMC**

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Interment at Libingan ng mga Bayani,
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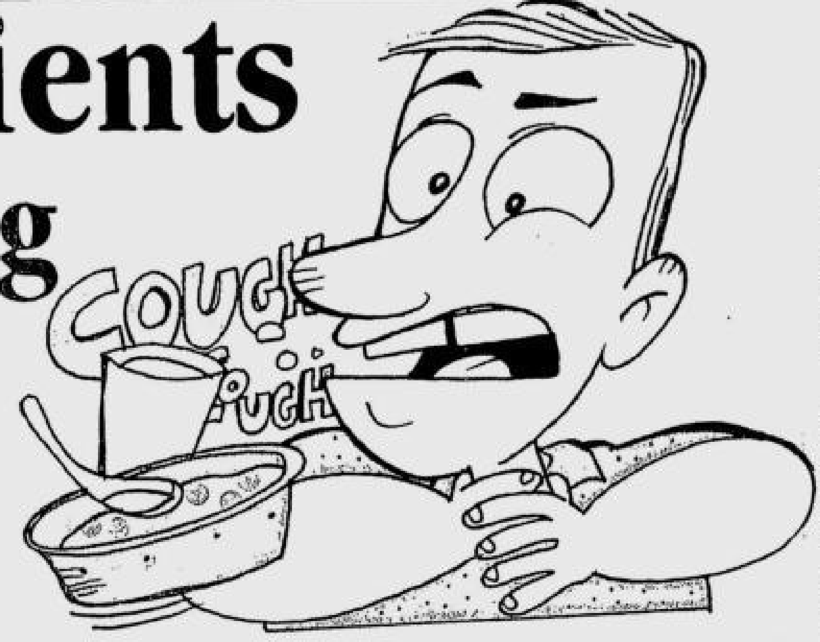
SCIENCE/HEALTH

E-mail: pr_science_health@inquirer.com.ph

Editor Cesar D. Mangawang

Text us your feedback: inquirer hea name/age/city/message to 2207 (Globe) or 283 (Smart)

Soothing patients with swallowing disorder



By Charles E. Buban

SWALLOWING DISORDERS, or dysphagia, is a general term used to describe one's inability to move food from the mouth to the stomach.

Thus, an individual who has this condition may experience pain when trying to swallow, cough before, after or during the swallow, feel like food is stuck in the throat, or in some cases not be able to swallow at all.

"For a huge percentage of stroke patients, those recovering from thyroid surgery or those with head and neck injuries, Parkinson's disease, multiple sclerosis, motor neuron diseases and cerebral palsy, something as natural and reflexive as swallowing can prove to be a difficult, painful and sometimes fatal exercise," said Dr. William Lim, an otorhinolaryngologist (one who specializes in evaluating and treating disorders of the ear, nose, throat) at St. Luke's Medical Center.

Small percentage

As critical as the condition is for these patients, Lim laments that only a small percentage are diagnosed with swallowing disorders.

"What patients and their families don't realize is that swallowing disorders can be fatal. The condition can lead to instant death by choking," the doctor warned.

But even if the patient does not choke, he or she is still in danger of getting aspiration pneumonia or the inflammation of the lungs and bronchial tubes caused by inhaling food, drink or saliva.

"Aspiration pneumonia can be serious, even life threatening especially for those over the age of 50, and with immune system or other health problems. A patient may get a lung infection that may spread to the bloodstream or other areas of the body, get other life threatening problems such as respiratory failure," Lim said.

Prevention important

"This is why prevention is so important. Once the cause is determined, swallowing disorders may be treated with medication, swallowing therapy and surgery (especially for the severely affected)," Lim said.

He said a patient can be trained to learn how to swallow again through exercises that stimulate the tongue and the mouth. Examples of this are double swallowing to ensure food goes down the esophagus (also stimulates the muscles of the palate) and doing the chin-tuck, which stretches tight muscles and ligaments in the neck.

"Aside from exercises, patients can be helped by changing their diets. Such patients should be given soft or liquid diets in order to facilitate the eating process, and should avoid certain types of food, particularly solids, that are more difficult to swallow," Lim suggested.

Limited options

Here in the Philippines, patients would have limited options as to what food to take, for example, rice porridge, food mixed with baby cereal or unflavored gelatin.

Recently however, Fresenius Kabi, a leading company in infusion therapy and clinical nutrition in Europe, introduced to the country a starch-based food thickener (called Thick & Easy) that when added to food and drinks results in a dense, cohesive consistency that allows patients with swallowing disorders to better control the food in their mouth.

"With this thickener, patients can now be saved from systemic complications such as dehydration, malnutrition and weight loss, and chronic respiratory insufficiency," the doctor acknowledged.

Thick & Easy can be added to all hot and cold liquids, nutritional supplements and all types of hot or cold pureed foods to develop a thicker consistency and prevent aspiration.

No simple process

SWALLOWING MAY SEEM TO BE A SIMple process, yet it involves complex stages.

"It entails the use of many nerves and muscles in the lips, tongue, mouth, throat and esophagus or the tube that connects your throat to your stomach," explained Dr. William Lim of St. Luke's Medical Center.

The first stage happens when the tongue moves the food around in the mouth for chewing and mixing with the saliva (to make food soft and moist). Once the food attains the right size for swallowing, the tongue collects the prepared food or liquid, making it ready for swallowing.

The next stage begins when the tongue pushes the food or liquid to the back of the mouth, which triggers a swallowing reflex that passes the food through the pharynx (the canal that connects the mouth with the esophagus).

"During this stage, the larynx or voice box closes tightly and breathing stops to prevent food or liquid from entering the lungs," Lim explained.

The final stage begins when food or liquid enters the esophagus, the canal that carries food and liquid to the stomach.

Since the structures involved in swallowing are also in such close proximity with the structures involved in breathing, the lack of coordination of the mouth and throat muscles (as in the case of individuals with swallowing disorders) may cause food and drink particles to go into the airway, which causes discomforts, infections and other serious complications and sometimes, instant death.

Flaming on the Net

EUREKA!

Queena N. Lee-Chua

ONCE, WHEN I WAS AT THE school cafeteria, I was hailed by a student, who then proceeded to continue texting on her cell. She was seated a few feet away from her friend, who was also busily punching in messages on her phone. To my consternation, I discovered that they were texting each other.

"Why are you texting each other?"

"To catch up with what's happening."

I felt like I was in a parallel universe. I rephrased the question, "Why text when you can just talk?"

They looked at me, smiled and shrugged.

When I recounted this experience in my next class, one guy volunteered this story. "My girlfriend broke up with me through text. She did not have the guts to tell me to my face, and up to now, I am still mad about the way she did it." This revelation opened the floodgates. Apparently, he was not alone.

I thought these were isolated incidents until I read about the phenomenon of flaming. Instead of text messages, flaming uses e-mail. People who are too shy or embarrassed to say things in person, perhaps because the message is rude or hurtful, often pluck up enough courage to say these things via the computer. In short, they engage in flaming.

Psychological causes

Psychologists call flaming "the online disinhibition effect." In an article for the journal CyberPsychology and Behavior, John Suler of Rider University in New Jersey listed various factors which lead to flaming: the anonymity of an Internet pseudonym, invisibility to other people, the delay between sending an e-mail and getting a reply, an exaggerated sense of self which stems from being alone, and the lack of any Internet authority figure. Flaming can be harmless (such as when a shy person meets friends online) or harmful (such as threats done anonymously).

What really happens during flaming? In an essay titled "Flame First, Think Later: New Clues to E-mail Misbehavior," Daniel Goleman, famous for the concept of EQ (emotional intelligence), explains, "In face-to-face interaction, the brain reads a continual cascade of emotional signs and social cues, instantaneously using them to guide our next move so that the encounter goes well ... But in e-mail, there are no channels for voice, facial expression, or other cues from the person who will receive what we say ... without the raised eyebrow that signals irony, say, or the tone of voice that signals delight, our cortex has little to go on. Lacking real-time cues, we can easily misread the printed words in an e-mail message, taking them the wrong way."

The perils of flaming

I also counsel my students, many of whom are impulsive, to exercise self-discipline. How many times have we hit the Send button before regretting it a second later? When I receive a not-so-nice e-mail (from a reader who demands that I answer his homework, for instance), I have learned not to respond to it right away, if at all. I have learned to restrain myself despite the strong impulse to answer back.

Coleman says, "If we are typing while agitated, the absence of information on how the other person is responding makes the [brain] circuitry for discretion more likely to fail. Our emotional impulses disinhibited, we type some infelicitous message and hit Send before a more sober second thought leads us to hit discard. We flame."

Flaming can lead to physical danger. Last year, in what was dubbed as a "Web rage attack," a London resident was convicted of assaulting a man with whom he had traded insults in a chat room.

Solution

According to Coleman, a proposed solution is to replace typed messages with video. If we can see whom we are communicating with, we are less likely to flame. Not a bad idea, but for me, the best solution is still discipline: Think before we write. Cool down before we do something we regret.

As for my students in the cafeteria, I gently reminded them to keep their cell phones away and learn to talk to each other face-to-face.

I acknowledge the assistance of my colleague, physicist and engineering professor Gregory Tangonan, who e-mailed information on the online disinhibition effect.

* * *

Queena N. Lee-Chua is a professor of mathematics and psychology at the Ateneo de Manila University. Contact her at blessbook@yahoo.com.

A happy dog's tail

DISCOVER

Massie Santos Ballon

IN A SINGLE PANEL CARTOON, AS THE FAMily dog enthusiastically greets his owner, one household cat confides to another that he refuses to give such effusive greetings because it only delays their feeding time. The cartoon shows the dog's delight in much the same way Snoopy's joyful dances—and were they always about food?—reduce his feet and tail to a series of lines to indicate movement. In the March issue of the journal Current Biology, however, Italian researchers suggest that a dog's wagging tail can convey more than simple joy to his owner.

Neuroscientist Giorgio Vallortigara, chair of behavioral neuroscience and animal cognition at the University of Trieste, worked with veterinarians Angelo Quaranta and Marcello Siniscalchi of the University of Bari's department of animal behavior to study the meaning of a dog's wagging tail. Vallortigara has long theorized that animals, like humans, can be left-brained and right-brained. In humans, logic is associated with the left hemisphere of the brain while art is associated with right-brain activity. For this study, Vallortigara et al. wondered how left and right brain activity was demonstrated in a dog's tail.

Dogs' reactions

Working with 15 male and 15 female dogs from an obedience school, Vallortigara et al. isolated each one at a time and then let each see four beings—his owner, a strange human, a cat and a Belgian Shepherd trained to be dominant to the dogs in the study. Studying the videos of the dogs' reactions afterward, the researchers found that when the dogs saw the humans, their tails wagged furiously, unsurprisingly with more enthusiasm for their owners than for the strangers.

When they measured the angles of the wagging tails, Vallortigara et al. found that the dogs' tails tended to angle perceptibly toward the right side. When the dogs saw the Belgian Shepherd however, their tails wagged less energetically than they did for their owners, and were angled more obviously toward the left side.

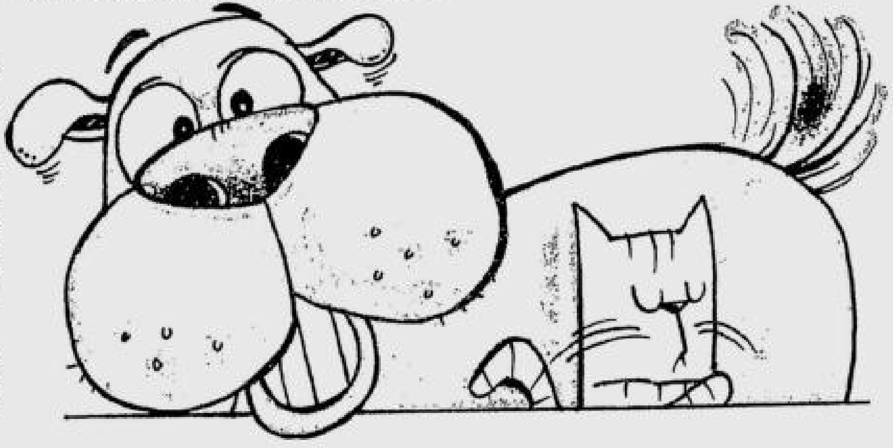
What wagging tail conveys

The researchers interpreted these results to mean that each hemisphere of a dog's brain delivers an emotion that the wagging tail conveys. In short, when the dog recognizes a friendly presence that is invited to approach, his tail wags to the right and the left side of the brain is activated. On the other hand, when the dog feels threatened, his tail wags toward the left and the right side of the brain is activated.

Interestingly, when the cat was shown to the dogs, Vallortigara et al. found that though the tail-wagging was more restrained, the dogs' tails tended to wag toward the right, which seems contrary to expectation given that cats are long held to be a dog's nemesis. While the researchers note that the cat was lent for the study by its owners, they don't mention if any of the dogs in the study had ever lived with cats. The overt friendliness extended by the dogs to the cat might be the result of subject bias because any or all of the dogs are used to living with cats, but Vallortigara et al. do not discuss this.

The cat data aside, the results of the study seem clear: a dog who is happy or senses no threat to himself wags his tail to the right while a dog who feels threatened wags his tail to the left. Dog lovers: it can't hurt to keep this in mind before you bend down to pet an unfamiliar dog. And see if Vallortigara et al.'s conclusions match what you see when your dog meets you at the door. As for cat owners, the cartoon mentioned at the beginning of this column gives one theory on why a cat is less overtly affectionate than a dog. Proving that hypothesis, however, is another matter entirely.

E-mail the author at massie@massie.com.



Success = IQ + EQ + AQ

MEDICAL FILES

By Rafael R. Castillo, MD

DR. BIBLY MACAYA, CURRENT PRESIDENT of the Manila Adventist Medical Center, and I were seated together during the silver wedding anniversary of a colleague. Our discussion ranged from politics to science and he discussed an article published in PDI recently about intelligence quotient (IQ) not necessarily correlating with financial success. This was based on an actual research which validated several other earlier researches showing that IQ does not have any strong definite correlation with all forms of success, be it in one's career, health or relationships.

It requires more than just intelligence to be successful, Bibly says. To him, success is more dependent on one's ability to create options and alternatives in life. Some call it "diskarte" or the skill to be able to play one's cards right no matter how bad the cards one was dealt with. In one published research, people of below average (yes, below average) intelligence were, overall, just about as successful and wealthy as those with higher scores on an IQ test.

We have heard or read of countless stories of extremely intelligent people who have gotten themselves into dire straits in all aspects of life. "Your IQ has really no relationship to your (financial success). People don't become rich just because they are smart," says Jay Zagorsky, author of one study on this subject and a research scientist at Ohio State University's Center for Human Resource Research.

Reassuring

Zagorsky's study, published in the journal Intelligence, should be reassuring to a lot of people who may not be intellectually blessed. Zagorsky admonishes that those with low intelligence should not believe they are handicapped, and those with high intelligence should not believe they have a sure definite advantage.

In Zagorsky's study, the only parameter in which they found it paid to be smart was that those with higher IQ scores tended to get paid more than others. Their financial and overall success on the long run however showed no definite advantage.

One can presume perhaps that if one is gifted with a superior intelligence and that ability to play one's cards right in life, then his chances of success would be more than others who are not as blessed as them intellectually and attitudinally. Bibly and I coined the term attitudinal IQ or AQ as representing that ability to play one's cards right most of the time as one weaves through life's challenges.

Some authors believe that a high IQ is only one third of the equation to success. One's emotional quotient (EQ) should form part of the equation to achieve success.

Correlation

A landmark study on the correlation of IQ, EQ and work success was done here in 1998 by Joseph Hee-Woo Jae at the Ateneo de Manila University. It was the first study ever comparing EQ and IQ as measures of work performance. It has scientifically demonstrated that EQ is actually more important in predicting success in the workplace than IQ.

The study provided concrete evidence that emotional intelligence is significantly and highly correlated with job performance, while cognitive intelligence has shown a very low and insignificant correlation with performance in the workplace.

We believe in EQ but a high attitudinal IQ or AQ is probably more comprehensive in scope than simple EQ. This consists of not only social skills and emotional maturity, but also decision-making capabilities, goal-setting and aspirations, flexibility to changes, and adopting positive qualities from their role models.

So the formula to success appears to consist of three components. Success = IQ + EQ + AQ. With God's blessing, of course, one may lack one or the other and still achieve success.

MESSAGE

Malacañan Palace
Manila

Warmest greetings to the officers and members of the **Philippine Heart Associatiaon (PHA)** as you hold your 38th Annual Convention and Scientific Meeting.

My administration has implemented programs and policies to improve the delivery of public health services to the Filipino people. We are committed to bring the benefits of our economic reforms to the grassroots through improved social services.

This 3-day convention, with the theme, **"Joining Hands to Unburden Hearts: Strategizing Cardiovascular Care,"** shows your commmitment to promote cost-effective cardiovascular care that will be most beneficial to more of our people.

May this event give you the opportunity to address other significant concerns in ardiovascular care, particularly the PHA's provision of free medical services to our less fortunate countrymen.

Mabuhay kayong lahat!

GMArroyo
GLORIA MACAPAGAL-ARROYO
President, Republic of the Philippines

Department of Health

My warmest greetings to the officers and members of the Philippine Heart Association (PHA) as they hold the 38th Annual Convention and Scientific Meeting, with the theme, **"Joining Hands to Unburden Hearts: Strategizing Cardiovascular Care".**

Various health issues have raised concerns among Filipinos, especially those that relate to the fast-paced lifestyle we have today. It is interesting to note that an issue such as cost-effective cardivoscular care will be tackled and hopefully, solutions will be found to address this growing concern.

As you promote your Association's advancement, may your camaraderie and unity be strengthened and may you continue to provide excellence in all your endeavors as we strive to achieve a healthy and progressive society.

Congratulations and mabuhay kayong lahat!

FRANCISCO T. DUQUE, III, MD
Secretary

Philippine Heart Association

Our warmest greetings to colleagues and friends!

We welcome all the participants and attendees of the PHA 38th Annual Convention that is fittingly hewed on the theme: **"Joining Hands to Unburden Hearts: Strategizing Cardiovascular Care"** from May 16-18, 2007 at the Edsa Shangri-La Hotel.

A new feature will be the i3 Summit (Innovations in Imaging and Intervention) that will unfurl advancements in the Interventional Cardiology, Electrophysiology, Cardiac Imaging and Non-coronary Vascular Intervention. We welcome the participation of our paramedical colleagues who are involved in both non-invasive and invasive cardiovascular diagnostic modalities.

Over-all Convention chair Dr. Ma. Belen Carisma and Scientific Committee chair Dr. Maria Teresa Abola, left no stone unturned to be able to carry out the convention concept. A record number of research papers have been submitted for the different categories that will be presented during the research hour on the second day.

The Socials Committee, headed by Dr. Saturnino Javier, has likewise prepared what promises to be an elegant but memorable Fellowship Night with the Filipiniana spirit but with a twist.

I thank you for your continued support to your Philippine Heart Association and I look forward to seeing you at our convention.

CESAR S. RECTO II, MD
PHA, President

PHILIPPINE HEART ASSOCIATION INC.
PHILIPPINE COLLEGE OF CARDIOLOGY

38th Annual Convention

"Joining Hands to Unburden Hearts: Strategizing Cardiovascular Care"

EDSA Shangri-La Hotel, Mandaluyong City, May 16-18, 2007

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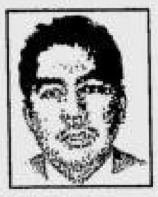

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PROGRAM AT-A-GLANCE

7:30 10:00	**REGISTRATION** *Lobby Level Business Center Area* Isla 2 **CONVOCATION AND OPENING CEREMONIES** **Dr. Mariano M. Alimurung Lecture** *Dr. Asuncion A. Reloza*	POSTER C - (BATANES) Isla 1 7:30 - 9:00 am [illegible] Isla 3 7:30 - 9:00 am MEET THE EXPERTS Difficult ECG Conference Presentors Dr. [illegible] Dr. Gladys Ruth Dewit Panelists Dr Donato Marañon Dr Timothy Dy Dr. Francis Marcellus Ramirez Dr Anthony King Garden Cath Video Theater 9:00 - 9:45 am Isla 2 **DR. HOMOBONO B. CALLEJA PROFESSORIAL LECTURE** **What are the "Best Buys" in Cardiovascular Disease?** *Dr. Tessa Tan-Torres Edejer*	Garden 7:30 - 9:00 am **Echo Video Theater** Isla 1 7:30 - 9:00 am **Natrapharm** Isla 3 7:30 - 9:00 am **CTMRI Video Theater** 9:00 - 9:45 am **PLENARY LECTURE 1** **Toward New European Guidelines on Hypertension** *Dr. Alberto Zanchetti* Isla 2
10:00 10:30	Visit Exhibits	Visit Exhibits	Visit Exhibits
10:30 - 12:30	**SYMPOSIA I** POSTER A - (BATANES) Isla 1 CAD Practice Guidelines in the Management of CAD Patient Dr [illegible] Diagnostic Modalities in CAD: What test to choose? Dr [illegible] Cost Effective Treatment Strategies for CAD: What is optimal? Dr Eric Oliver Sison Isla 2 Prev-Cardio & Stroke & PVD Prevention of Atherothrombosis: Focus on Stroke & Antiplatelet Therapy Dr Alejandro Diaz CAD & Anti-Platelet Therapy Current Strategies of Prevention Dr Eduardo Caguioa Primary & Secondary Prevention of Venous Thromboembolism Panelists: Dr [illegible] Dr Teresita De Guia Dr [illegible] Isla 3 Cardiomyopathy Management of Pulmonary Hypertension: Comparisons & Proposals Dr [illegible] Sleep Apnea & Heart Failure: Short of Sleep to Short of Breath Dr [illegible] *i3* Garden Late Drug Eluting Stent Thrombosis: Is there cause for Concern? Dr Gregorio Martinez Unprotected Left Main Stenosis Stenting: Ready to be Mainstream Therapy? Dr Timothy Dy Next Generation Drug Eluting Stents: What is on the horizon? Dr Ronald Estacio Update on Stem Cell Therapy in Acute Myocardial Infarction Dr Rogelio Tangco Multivessel Coronary Artery Disease: CABG or Multivessel Stenting? Dr James Ho	**SYMPOSIA II** Isla 1 CHF & CR Cardiac Resynchronization Therapy? Dr. Nannette Rey Cost Effective Management of Heart Failure/Heart Failure Clinic Dr. Reynaldo Fajardo Exercise and Heart Failure: "Moving the Heart" Dr Carlos Ponciano Figueroa Isla 2 CPR ACLS Recertifying Exam Isla 3 HPN HPN Treatment Outcomes in the Philippines over the last 2 Decades Dr Nelson Abelardo PRESYON 2 - Target Organ Damage Report Dr Jorge Sison Perceptions on HPN in the Philippines Dr. [illegible] *i3* Cost Effective Cardiac Evaluation and Management thru adherence to Philippine Echocardiography Competency Guidelines Dr [illegible] Strengths and Limitations of Echocardiography in the Diagnosis of CAD and in the Evaluation of Myocardial Viability Dr [illegible] Strengths and Limitations of Nuclear Imaging in the Diagnosis of CAD and in the Evaluation of Myocardial Viability Dr [illegible] POSTER D - (BATANES)	**SYMPOSIA III** Isla 1 CPR ACLS Recertifying Exam Isla 2 CVS Locally Manufactured Bioprosthetic Valve Dr [illegible] Locally Manufactured Mitral Ring Dr Florencio Castillo *i3* Coronary CT Angiography: An Introduction Dr [illegible] Current Concepts, Practice and Future Directions of CT Angiography Dr [illegible] Current Concepts, Practice and Future Application of Cardiac MR Dr [illegible] Philippine Experience in Cardiac MR Dr [illegible] Management of Intracranial Stenosis Dr Peter Rivera Panel Discussion: Incidental Finding of Renal Artery Stenosis During Coronary Angiography: Should We Treat It? Dr Oscar Naidas (Nephrologist) Dr [illegible] POSTER E - (BATANES)
12:30-2:30	Satellite Symposia Isla 1 Merck, Inc Isla 2 Schering Plough Isla 3 Sanofi Aventis Garden MSD Mindoro [illegible] Annual Meeting	Satellite Symposia Isla 1 Pfizer Inc. Isla 2 Therapharma Isla 3 Astra Zeneca Garden Bayer Phils	Satellite Symposia Isla 1 Pfizer Inc. Isla 2 Therapharma Isla 3 Sanofi Garden GSK
2:30-3:30	POSTER B - (BATANES) Isla 1 PHA APSC SYMPOSIUM "The Many Facets of Asian CV Care" CV Outcome Studies in Asia in the Philippines Dr Rody Sy Is There a Role for Traditional or Herbal Medicine in CV Care? Dr Eugene Reyes Cardiovascular Regeneration Therapy [illegible] Isla 3 PEDIA SYMPOSIUM Understanding the CV Health Risk of Filipino Children Dr. [illegible] Dr [illegible] Dr [illegible] Dr. Wilberto Lopez Optimizing Medical Care vs Early Surgery in Shunt Anomalies: A Debate Dr [illegible] - Medical Case Dr. Olympia Malanyaon-Surgery *i3* EPS Should we work up Vasovagal Syncope Dr. Gertrude Ong-Cordovez Indications for Cardiac Resynchronization: Does CRT save lives? Dr. Anthony King Practical approach to Anti-arrhythmic drug therapy. Dr. [illegible] RFCA 2007: Current State of the Art of Radiofrequency Catheter Ablation in the Treatment of Supraventricular Tachycardias. Dr. Francis Marcellus Ramirez	**PHA Research Hour** Isla 1 Dr. Francisco F. Tangco Young Investigator's Award Isla 2 PHA-SERVIER AWARD For Most Outstanding Research in Cardiology Isla 3 Case Report & Meta Analysis Presentation Batanes WCE Research Proposal Contest Garden ACLS Recertifying Exam	Isla 2 **Dr. Rodolfo C. Soto Professorial Lecture** Management of CAD in the 21st Century: Diagnostic and Therapeutic Advances *Dr. Tan Huay Cheem* Garden ACLS Recertifying Exam
3:30-4:00	Visit Exhibits	Visit Exhibits	Visit Exhibits
4:00 - 5:00	Isla 1 WOMEN & HEALTH Peripartal Cardiomyopathy: A Contraindication for Subsequent Pregnancies? Dr [illegible] Heart Disease with High Pregnancy Risk: Beyond the "Conceivable"? Dr Esperanza Cabral [illegible] Dr [illegible] Isla 3 Cardiology & the Law Dr Rodolfo C. Soto Isla 2 [illegible] DEBATE Subcommittee on [illegible] in training and Therapharma Mindoro PSPC Annual Meeting	**Annual Business Meeting** *Isla 1 & 2*	Isla 1 The Art of Auscultation: Analog to Digital *Dr. Romeo Divinagracia* Isla 3 Palakasan ng Puso 2 Subcommittee on cardiology in training and Bayer
5:00 - 7:00	Satellite Symposia Isla 1 Isla 2 Therapharma Isla 3 Otsuka Garden	Satellite Symposia Isla 1 Corbridge Isla 2 Therapharma Isla 3 Solvay Pharma Garden	**PHA THANKSGIVING MASS** **Closing Ceremonies** *Isla 2*
7:00	**Fellowship Night** Isla 1 & Isla 2 	**Alumni Homecoming** **President's Night**	**Chapters' Night** *Isla 1*

PURKINJE NETWORK : IT LECTURES & EXHBITS (MACTAN)

PURKINJE NETWORK : IT LECTURES & EXHBITS (MACTAN)

PURKINJE NETWORK : IT LECTURES & EXHBITS (MACTAN)

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BUSINESS

Technology trickling down to the farmers

By Amy R. Remo

TECHNOLOGY IS COMING TO THE FARMers' doorstep.

Experts from the Philippine Rice Research Institute have started inviting themselves to farmers' fields to spread the "gospel" of rice science and technology.

According to PhilRice, this approach makes it easier for farmers to get advice from rice researchers, agricultural technologists or even with local government units and provincial agriculturists on problems encountered in their fields.

Through the Mobile Rice Teknoklinik and the traditional Farmer's Field Day, PhilRice reaches out to farmers to inform, educate and help them make use of existing rice and farming technologies to improve farm output.

Venue for interaction

The Mobile Rice Teknoklinik (teknolohiya klinika or technology clinic) provides a venue where farmers can interact with rice experts, researchers and fellow farmers.

"Teknoklinik is more of an open forum, enhanced by technology exhibits, between farmers and experts," Ruben Miranda, head of PhilRice's Technology Management and Services Division, said in a statement.

For this year's dry season, PhilRice has already initiated several Teknoklinik meetings with farmers in 10 sites across Nueva Ecija, Pampanga, Pangasinan, Tarlac and Zambales.

PhilRice said that it prioritizes far-flung, remote areas not easily reached by the Department of Agriculture.

Pedro Valero, one of the farmer-participants in a recent Teknoklinik at San Jacinto, Pangasinan, said he was thankful to PhilRice for giving him an idea of what rice variety is best suited to his field.

"I am hopeful that I will harvest more if I follow PhilRice's recommended variety," said Valero.

The most attended Teknoklinik session was held in Zambales last month, with more than 300 active participants from different barangays.

Field demonstrations

Farmers asked soil experts Jovino de Dios and Myrna Malabayabas why their land has not been yielding as much rice as it used to.

Experts diagnosed that the soil is not as fertile due to the 1991 Mt. Pinatubo eruption, which covered the soil with lahar.

De Dios thus advised farmers to plow deeper to get to the fertile soil.

He also suggested that the farmers put up a drainage system to prevent root poisoning.

Meanwhile, the Farmer's Field Day is traditionally conducted at PhilRice's Central Experiment Station in Maligaya, Science City of Muñoz in Nueva Ecija.

However, due to public demand, field days were organized in nearby provinces and towns of Nueva Ecija, and in different PhilRice branch stations.

According to the PhilRice, the Farmer's Field Day demonstrates how research-based technologies can work in the fields to farmers, extension workers and local executives who are likely to benefit from technology demonstrations.

"[Field days] promote technologies that are high-yielding and cost-efficient by discussing and interpreting results from the technology tested and demonstrated in techno demo farms," Miranda said. "Field days show the impact of training among participating farmers."

Modern farmer

Dominador Perez, owner of a techno demo farm at Agbannauag, Rizal said that the technologies presented helped increase the farmers' yield and income.

For his 1.2-ha farm, Perez used hybrid variety SL-8H and has spent almost P15,545 for a drum seeder.

The drum seeder mechanically plants the seeds, thus saving on manual labor.

He said he was able to cut his transplanting costs by 10 percent.

His farm was used during a Farmer's Field Day at Agbannauag, Rizal to demonstrate the effectiveness of the PhilRice drum seeder.

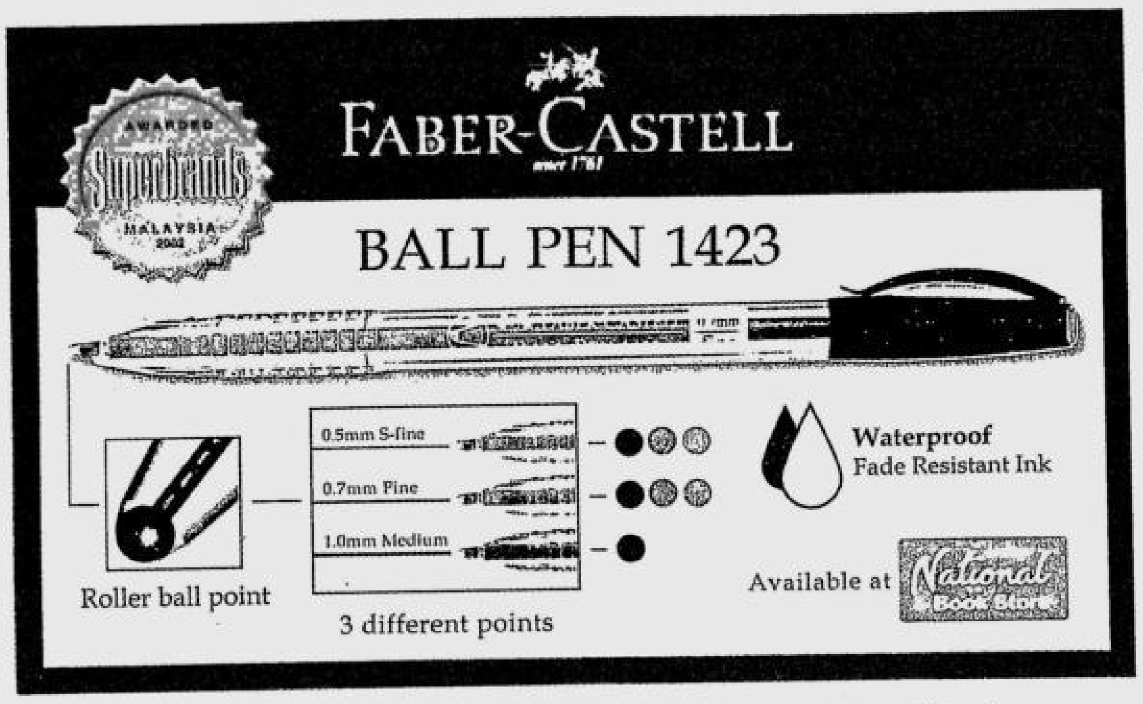
Other farmer partners also gave their testimonies during the event regarding the use of certified and hybrid seeds, fertilizer, water and pest management technologies.

PhilRice said these technologies helped farmers increase yield by more than 10 percent or about 120 to 150 cavans a hectare, while still applying their personal farming practices.

"Technology awareness is our primary goal in this mission. Through these events, participants were informed about what PhilRice is doing in its research and technology promotions," said Miranda.

PhilRice said most of the program participants were from Central Luzon, Pangasinan and Ilocos regions.

Through these programs, PhilRice is confident that the cost-efficient rice-farming technologies will not only help farmers earn more, but also develop them into a modern breed of Filipino rice farmers.



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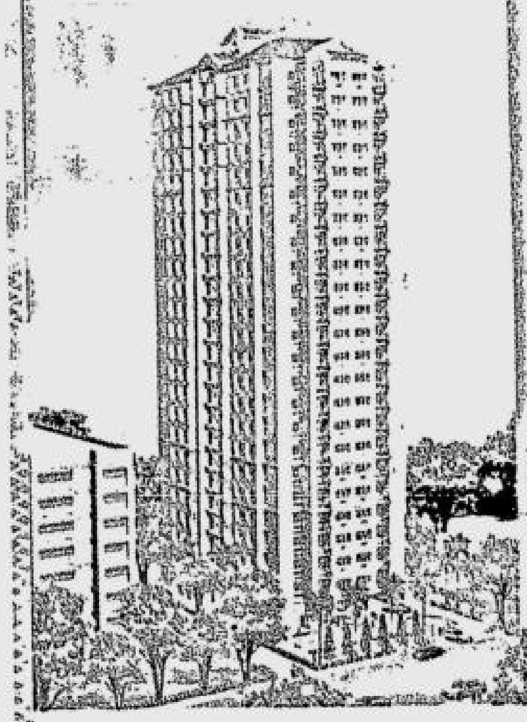

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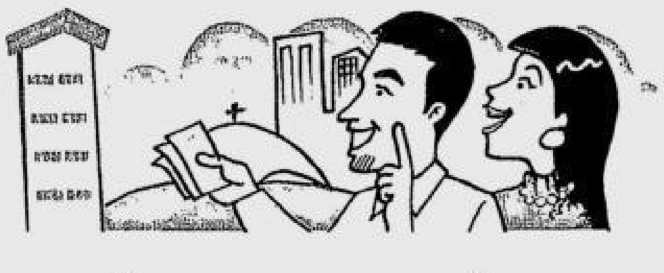
Editor Cesar D. Mangawang

The pros and cons of house and condo living



By Tessa R. Salazar

HUNTING FOR A CONDOminium or a house and lot? Can't make up your mind which to prioritize: should your abode be near your workplace; should it be standing on a detached lot, as well, so you can tend a garden; or should you consider having close neighbors—the kind living in a condominium would bring?

The common trade-off with having your own house and lot nowadays is your distance from your workplace. Condominiums offer much closer proximities to urban workplaces.

But what are the other advantages and disadvantages of living in a house and lot and living in a condominium? INQUIRER Property asked property consultants and developers.

More 'breathable'

Property consultant Oceanic Realty International Group (formerly ERA) stresses that house and lots generally offer more "breathable" and bigger areas, spacious rooms, gardens, more space for pets, and space for more expansive communities. Higher social interaction among neighbors and reasonable association dues are achievable. Subdivisions can accommodate more parking areas, offer additional functional areas, and generally offer a cleaner environment.

House and lots offer space for bigger families. In general, house and lot owners are middle aged with at least three children.

Property developer Moldex's design and planning group says that the number one advantage of owning a house and lot is its large contiguous property. For this developer, a house and lot owner can be assured of large open spaces and a low-density community.

Moldex says investing in a house and lot also means the family can enjoy modern community amenities such as swimming pools, children's playground and function rooms for all occasions. Flexibility also makes it possible to convert your house from a primary residence into a vacation house.

Keeping up with fast-paced lifestyles

Grant Orbeta, Phinma Properties assistant vice president for marketing and design, says condo units in major urban centers, on the other hand, are best suited for today's fast-paced lifestyles.

Orbeta observes that condo users as usually single or young couples start their families, typical middle-level executives with less time in their hands for commuting or driving. They would prefer to be near their work or places of interest.

Eric M. Soriano, country president and CEO of Oceanic Realty International Group, says: "In the end, for practicality sake, the tremendous growth of the middle market and given the expensive land as well as the perennial traffic in the metropolis, a condominium unit offers a practical solution."

For Avida Towers, a subsidiary of Ayala Land, a well-developed condo means enjoying the availability of water and tight security round the clock, well-maintained amenities and other aspects of a well-planned community and superior property management.

According to Avida, a family who used to live in a two-story, five-bedroom house and moved to a two-bedroom condo now only had to pay a third of what they used to pay for their water bills. The same happened to their electricity bills, as well.

Orbeta says smaller units make living more affordable for young urban employees. Many units, he adds, are already furnished for hassle free move-ins.

He says most city dwellers do not have the time to monitor construction and renovation of their units. Condos allow them the convenience of moving in to pre-finished units that suit their tastes and budget. In addition, condos are easier to clean and maintain.

Oceanic Realty says condo living offers a menu of integrated services: higher level of security, exceptional facilities management, concierge or housekeeping services, better appreciation on investment, and faster turnover on sales or rentals.

Soriano adds that relatively higher demands for condos arise because of the emerging new markets (among OFWs, yuppies, young couples, and mobile families) interested to migrate and live in the center of the megalopolis (Metro Manila).

According to him, the demand for condos starts with early nesters and is sustained all the way to the senior adults whose children have moved out of the house.

Soriano also says that there are new trends in condominium development in the Philippines, Singapore, Japan, Korea and Hong Kong. He adds that there is also the integration of all forms of conveniences in residential developments

Travel time a drawback

"Unless a village is located near central business districts, distance and travel time (for those living in houses and lots) is a drawback. Higher fuel prices means more fuel and household expenses," Soriano says.

He adds that this could also mean house owners would be relatively far from places of interest such as hospitals, malls and schools.

Orbeta says: "There is a growing market of young employees and professionals who choose to move out of their parents' homes. These people would benefit from the convenience and security offered by condo units which are easy to maintain, have housekeepers, maintenance and security service."

Restrictions of condo living

Orbeta says Filipinos who move from rental apartments or house and lots to condos generally find themselves adjusting to house rules and restrictions of the condo lifestyle. Many condos prohibits pets, noise, "sampay" (exposed laundry) that Filipino apartment dwellers have typically grown accustomed to.

"However, they soon realize that the house rules are designed to make sure they have an orderly, safe and clean living environment that will foster the appreciation of their hard-earned investments," he adds.

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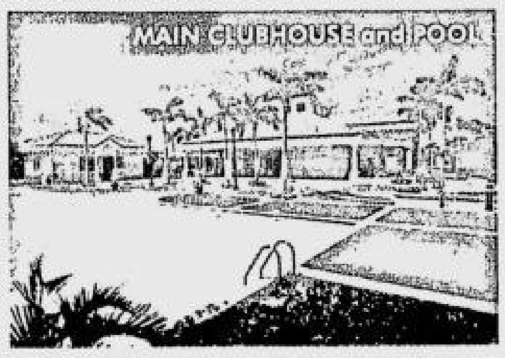
CLASSIQUE: house models



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DESIGN DIMENSIONS

Isabel Berenguer Asuncion

WHENEVER I ENCOUNTER them, a compelling urge overwhelms me to remove my shoes, bare my soles, and feel for myself the new textures offered by the current crop of floor coverings.

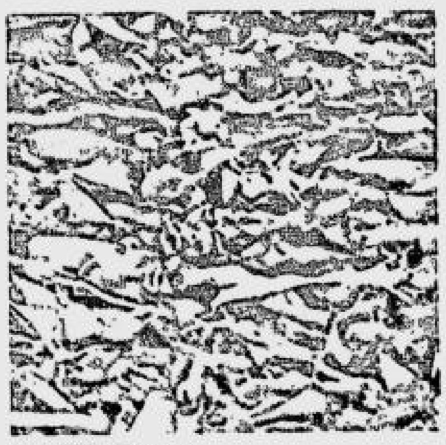
Loose-laid and created primarily for decorative purposes, the new generation of carpets offers a variety of surfaces and materials that complement contemporary design elements. The industry has moved far beyond the traditional Asian or Eastern carpets, the axminsters of the '70s and '80s, the monotonous cut piles and loop piles of the '90s. Rugs today are at their most textural, with weave patterns, materials and pile heights that are unparalleled. And they are being used not only in homes, but also in commercial and hospitality spaces.

Few options

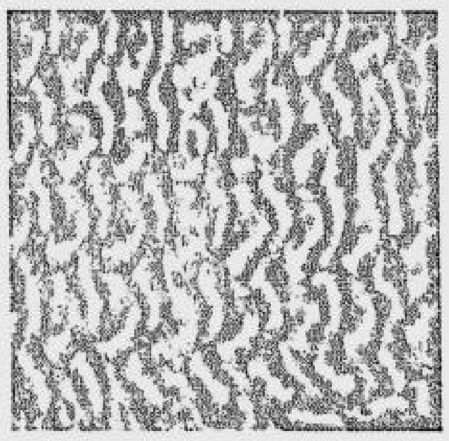
Here are a few of the options now available in the market:

- **Natural woven rugs have a variety of materials and textures.** Going beyond the usual sisals, natural rugs come in a variety of patterns, weaves and thicknesses. Materials range from abaca to jute to seagrass and other indigenous fibers. Colors start from light golden tones to dark burnt browns. On an all-natural design scheme of timber, cotton and linen, these carpets complete a space. They work just as well with more luxurious materials like heavy jacquards and microfiber. Best of all, they can withstand a lot of wear and tear.
- **Mats made of runo bamboo, stripped bamboo and timber are suitable for outdoor spaces as well as casual indoor areas.** They are also robust and durable.
- **Leather carpets are made from a wide assortment of hides, produced in one hue or in an array of colors, and in multi-material patchwork patterns.** This is most suitable for those who fear the dust mites associated with thick carpets. A wide array of colors are available: browns for the Asian schemes, greens and blues for the more eclectic, and light creams and whites for the light and bright contemporary living room. They also come in riotous and flamboyant colors.
- **Fur rugs are the essence of luxury and indulgence.** My personal favorite, fur carpets add softness and lightness to very contemporary spaces. As accents, they add warmth to chrome and leather furniture on a polished cement floor.
- **Sheepskins rugs are plush and lustrous.** Usually from Australian or New Zealand sheep, they are more commonly sold in single hides. Sometimes cut, matched and stitched into intricately patterned rugs, they are much appreciated for their delicate softness. They make wonderful bedside accents or can be loosely laid over a lounge chair.
- **Faux-fur carpets made from natural and synthetic fibers are more politically correct and can also do the job of the real thing.** In sheepskin, cat and mink faux fur, these copycats come in a wide assortment of coats and are absolutely difficult to tell apart from their natural versions.
- **Shag rugs are the hippest of the lot.** They are made from an array of fibers and textiles—usually variations of wool and in strips of textile and soft leather. The wool variations play wildly with fiber thicknesses, lengths and color combos. Thick and dense, they bring softness to a space defined by the rigid geometry of modernity.

SHEEPSKIN rug

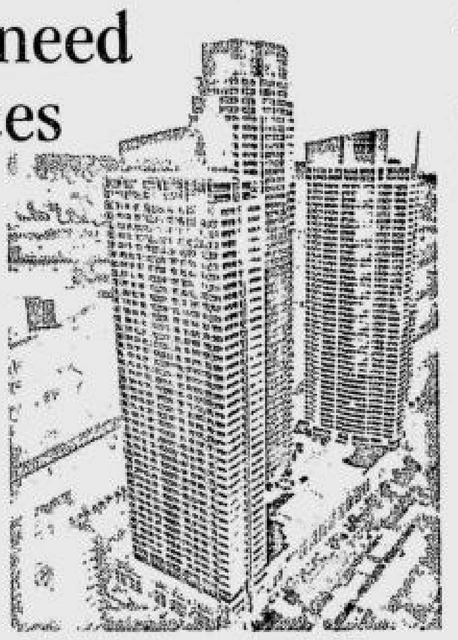


LEATHER Shag rug



ABACA rug

Everything you need at The Residences at Greenbelt



ARCHITECT'S perspective of TRAG Building in Greenbelt

WOULDN'T IT BE NICE TO HAVE EVERYthing you need just right outside your doorstep? If you want to run to your favorite deli, get some outfits altered or complete some business errands, The Residences at Greenbelt guarantees priceless access to every lifestyle destination literally minutes away from home.

To make life even more convenient for its residents, The Residences at Greenbelt features a ground level commercial area with a choice set of establishments. Essentials are literally an elevator ride away with a lifestyle and wellness zone housing delicatessen, pastry shops, cafés, spas and salons. For other everyday needs, there's a banking facility, Internet café, photo processing service, drugstore and convenience store as well as a laundromat and dry cleaning service.

Access to Greenbelt

With a seamless connection to Greenbelt, The Residences at Greenbelt's ground level commercial area does provide its residents a taste of exceptional living. When your backyard opens up to the Greenbelt Park and Chapel, or leads you to the world-class Ayala Museum, you know you are one of the few who can truly claim unparalleled access to Greenbelt.

At your leisure, stroll through Greenbelt's arcades, stop by your favorite cafes and while your time at its many boutiques. Then, just as easily, retreat back into the privacy of The Residences at Greenbelt.

Full-scale amenities

Giving a whole new meaning to high-rise living, The Residences at Greenbelt also has distinctive, full-scale amenities at The Fifth.

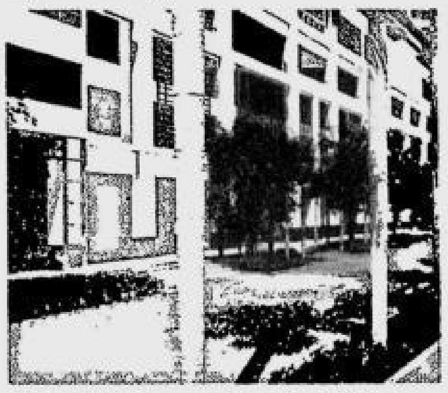
The 5,000-square-meter area provides country-club living in the middle of the city. This includes a fully equipped gym and fitness center, luxury spa, mini theater, game room, lap pools and a children's play area. These provide residents with an endless array of leisure choices day to day.

Various unit sizes

Residents can choose from various unit sizes depending on their lifestyle needs: a one-bedroom unit, two- and three-bedroom unit, and the ultra-luxurious penthouse—all offering a gorgeous view of the metropolis. And with unparalleled views, residents can look out into the Makati skyline, Manila Bay, Laguna hills, or the expansive greenery of the San Lorenzo Village.

The Residences at Greenbelt is a signature project of Ayala Land Premier. Ayala Land Premier carries the heritage of Ayala Land, strengthening its distinction as the first, full-line real estate developer to meet the needs of discerning homeowners, creating new lifestyles and appointing prime addresses. Innovatively designed and exceptionally engineered, Ayala Land Premier developments define distinctive living.

For further information about The Residences at Greenbelt, please call 848-5000, or log on to www.ayalalandpremier.com, or e-mail ask@ayalalandpremier.com. Model units are available for viewing at the 3rd level, Greenbelt 3, Ayala Center.



ARCHITECT'S perspective of TRAG façade

The 3Cs to long-term rodent control

MANY ATTEMPTS TO CONTROL AN unwanted rodent population fail because little effort is spent on understanding how they behave. For a long-term solution to rats and mice in the home, it is vital to understand that only a committed, continuous effort from the entire community can rid our homes of these pests.

A rat infestation should never be taken lightly. Rodents have been sharing our homes since time immemorial. They eat the same food humans do and contaminate 10 times as much food as they eat with their urine, droppings and hair. Rodents can carry at least 10 different kinds of life-threatening diseases including bubonic plague, murine typhus, leptospirosis, rabies and bacterial poisoning. It is also not unheard of for rats to bite sleeping children in their attempt to eat bits of food which was not washed off from a child before going to bed. Rats and mice have also been implicated in starting house fires because of their tendency to gnaw at anything, including electrical wires in our homes.

Mari-Gail Lasam-Cruz, marketing manager of Neumann and Mueller Philippines Inc., the distributor of Racumin products in the Philippines says, "Despite the dangers that rats pose to humans, most people are still at a loss on how to effectively deal with rat infestation, much less prevent its recurrence."

"While some efforts to rid a home of rats can produce good results for awhile, it is only when whole communities are committed to using a well-thought-out rodent control system continuously over time that a long-term solution becomes possible," she continues.

Racumin products are developed by Bayer Home, a brand trusted worldwide for its proven efficacy and safety profile. Used in line with other rodent control methods, Racumin offers a comprehensive system designed to exterminate rodent pests and ensure a long-term solution to an age-old problem.

Commitment

To win back your home from unwanted rodent infestations, you have to commit yourself to understanding their behavior. Arming yourself with this knowledge will help you combat them more effectively.

For example, rats are canny creatures that easily learn to avoid danger. That's why they prefer to run along the walls of a room instead of being out in the open. Racumin Paste is a ready-to-use mixture of Racumin, highly attractive ground cereals and fresh vegetable oil which comes in convenient sachets that may easily be placed in areas where rodent pests frequent. Rodents which may develop bait shyness for other poisons will not hesitate to eat Racumin Paste because its effects are not felt for a few days so they do not associate it with anything dangerous. Rodents also prefer fresh over rancid food. The fat content of Racumin Paste has been especially designed to last a very long time without becoming rancid so it remains attractive to rats for a longer period. Racumin Paste contains Bitrex to lessen its palatability to other creatures while being practically irresistible to rodent pests.

If on the other hand, you have a mice problem instead of a rat problem, Racumin Ready-Made Bait takes advantage of mice's nibbling behavior and love for cereals to lure them to their demise. Effective against rats as well as mice, Racumin Ready-Made Bait is a mixture of Racumin and fresh fragrant rice (colored blue so as to avoid contaminating regular rice) which can continuously be used for as long as rodents are present.

Continuous vigilance

You don't have to actually see a rat or mouse to know your home has been invaded. They avoid detection because they are active mostly at night. Rats are most active during the first half of the night if food is abundant; while mice are generally active at night, both right after dark and between midnight and dawn. However, both rats and mice will be active during daytime hours whenever food is scarce and when they are overpopulated.

To detect their presence, listen to them at night, especially squeaking which indicates young rodents in the nest. Look for gnawed objects (they sharpen their teeth daily), urine and droppings (they have preferred toilet areas but will also void almost anywhere), runways (their favorite routes in search of food and water), rub marks (dark, greasy smudges that happen when their fur comes into contact with the wall repeatedly), and tracks (5 toes in the back, 4 toes in front with tail drag marks).

To help you detect the presence of unwanted rodent pests, you may want to use Racumin Tracking Powder. It contains Coumatetralyl which is effective as both bait and tracking powder. Sprinkle along possible rodent runways and near other suspected places rodents frequent in the night. Rodents will lick the Racumin Tracking Powder that sticks to their fur and get a lethal dose while leaving marks that can help you find out where they nest.

Community involvement

Like most rodents, rats are extremely prolific creatures. Females reach sexual maturity at 5 weeks of age and go into heat every 4-5 days from then on unless they're pregnant or nursing. Each female rat can have as much as 7 litters a year with each litter producing an average of 10-12 baby rats which have no qualms about reproducing with their family members as soon as they mature. Imagine how quickly a rat population can grow if left unchecked!

As with most pests that make their home within our homes, it's necessary to get rid of all and not just a few in order to guarantee a pest-free home. That is why it is essential to get the community involved especially in dense communities such as apartments, condominiums or townhouses where rodents can easily move from one home to the next. Good housekeeping and sanitation are basic factors in rodent control. By simply depriving these pests the food, water and harborage they need, you are already doing a lot to reduce the population.

It is only when communities are committed to solving the problem of unwanted rodents through a consistent pest control program can long-term solutions become reality. Only then can we call our homes our own.

Amalfi, CrownAsia's sought-after exclusive enclave

A GROWING NUMBER OF INDIVIDUALS and families in Metro Manila are seeking comfortable residential communities with down-to-earth values that offer refuge from urban vexations without long hours of travel to and from various destinations. The need for such enclaves is met by CrownAsia, the country's pioneer developer of master-planned and themed communities that combine practicality and style, with its exclusive Italian-inspired community named Amalfi which is strategically located in Dasmariñas, Cavite.

Amalfi is the newest development situated within The Islands, a 100-hectare collection of enclaves developed by Brittany Corp. together with CrownAsia. Amalfi draws inspiration from its namesake town in the province of Salerno in Italy's region of Campania. With charming, picturesque towns, beach strips and laidback ambiance, Italy's Amalfi Coast is one of the world's most desirable recreational destinations.

With an ambiance evocative of its namesake, CrownAsia's Amalfi has become the choice of Filipino families who want to live in an accessible yet exclusive residential community that provides a sense of relaxed living.

New luxurious homes

Amalfi's continuing success is heralded by the recent introduction of the Luxuria Home Series, CrownAsia's latest collection of home models. Luxuria homes are inspired by the laid-back lifestyle of the Italian countryside and the distinct architectural design of picturesque homes found in the Mediterranean. The Luxuria collection boasts seven models, each with unique configurations for living that combine functionality and esthetics to fit the varying needs of young couples and growing families.

These models are Tiffany, with a 86-sq-m floor area on a 110-sq-m lot; Lalique, with a 110-sq-m floor area on a 121-sq-m lot; Murano, with a 150-sq-m floor area on a 132-sq-m lot; Lenox, with a 171-sq-m floor area on a 150-sq-m lot; Llardo, with a 192-sq-m floor area on a 180-sq-m lot; Rosenthal, with a 207-sq-m floor area on a lot area starting at 180-sq-m; and Roman, with a 252-sq-m floor area on a minimum lot area of 210 sq m. Prices range from P3 million to P8 million.

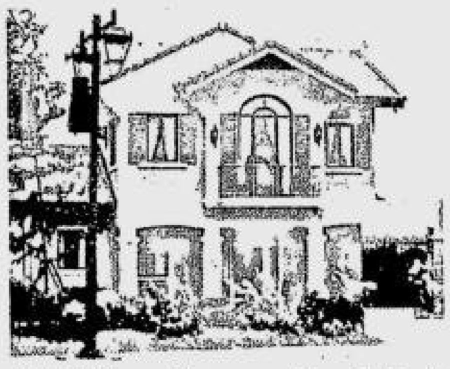
Meanwhile, Amalfi now also offers lots-only packages, allowing residents to have an Italian-inspired residence built to suit their taste and living requirements.

First-class amenities

Amalfi will have first-class facilities and amenities for leisure such as a clubhouse, swimming pools, playing courts, and gardens.

Located within the The Islands is St.Paul's College, an exclusive school with quality elementary and secondary education. De La Salle University and Emilio Aguinaldo College in Dasmariñas are just a few minutes away. Commercial establishments like SM and Robinsons, as well as premiere golf courses are also found within the area.

Accessibility



LALIQUE is one of the new models available at the exclusive and accessible Amalfi enclave.

The strategic location of Amalfi in The Islands offers access from Alabang in as quick as 30 minutes via the wide Daang-Hari highway through Molino-Paliparan highway. The Islands has opened a new access road to Molino-Paliparan, only a few minutes from Amalfi.

Alabang is also conveniently reached via SLEX through Carmona; Makati is within easy travel via SLEX through Carmona and Southwoods; Manila is accessible via the Coastal Road; and the leisure and resort destinations of Tagaytay, Batangas and Laguna are just down the way from Governor's Drive, where The Islands' main entrance lies.

Amalfi residents are welcomed by a meandering road designed for relaxed driving, a grand rotunda with an array of water fountain features, and then ushered through a gate into the enclave itself. Green landscaping and quaint gardens further evoke the charm of Southern Italy.

Truly, CrownAsia, as the country's largest developer of mid-range residential communities, brings to life the joys of Italian-inspired living with the exclusive and conveniently accessible enclave of Amalfi. Property previews may be arranged by calling 873-1614 and 871-8412, or logging on to www.crownasia.com.ph.

THE MURANO evokes the laid-back lifestyle offered at Amalfi.

Cebu City's finest, innovative club

WHEN CLUB ULTIMA STARTED OPERATIONS on Dec. 26 in the heart of the Cebu City, it opened its doors to corporate and leisure travelers seeking more than just a room to sleep in for the night and days to unwind for the week. With Crown Regency Suites inventory of 54 rooms, Club Ultima is able to give more personalized service to its members and guests.

Says general manager Jun Bondoc: "Club Ultima is now established as total lifestyle environment, offering elegance with convenience, efficiency and sensational service." He further adds, "We give much importance to training our staff to recognize, anticipate and accommodate the needs of our guests." And in keeping the convenience of its guests in mind, Crown Regency's suite rooms are intended to bring the classic comforts of home amid five-star luxuries

Warm welcome

At the outset, there is a warm old-fashioned welcome for guests as they step into the 19th floor lobby with its spacious high-speed elevator. Then comes the subtle extra effort upon check-in to ensure that every guest's stay is pleasant and truly extraordinary experience.

If you want to stay for long, Crown Regency Hotel in Mactan, Cebu, is designed similar to "service apartments" but its suite room is designed to simulate the feel of a home. It is perfect residence not only for long-staying business travelers and expats but for extended vacationers as well.

Medical spa

At day's ends, one can look forward to retiring to the cozy Club Ultima's rooms or may pamper himself and elevate your senses at Prana Medispa—the country's most extensive Medi Spa facility today where science and wellness meet to bring the most modern yet noninvasive esthetics treatments for both female and male clients.

This medical spa employs well-trained Indonesian and local therapists. It offers amazing services and modern equipment for the ultimate spa pleasure. Equipment at Prana Medispa include Spa Jet, Dynamed Capsule, aculite, vitalite, dead sea pool, the skin master treatment, mesotherapy, aurora and other cutting-edge beauty services.

Dining needs

Fulfilling dining needs of guests are the restaurant outlets—Wang Shan Lo Chinese Cuisine, .r. Grill Bar and Restaurant, and Kotie Japanese Restaurant—which offers thoughtfully prepared menu items so as to serve only satisfying meals to its patrons. The club also boasts of its highly personalized services and delectable dishes at the Paek during special events, making it a favorite venue for meetings and celebrations.

Pleasure and relaxation is also assured at the Club Ultima's equipped gym, steam room and heated indoor pool. A brigade of professional masseuses offering various kinds of massages is at one's service.

Club Ultima is just stone's throw from the major commercial areas of Metro Cebu, making the club a true sanctuary for those who evade hustle and bustle of the traffic in the city.

Besides, it's equipped with business facilities, so you can do your Internet and businesses inside.

Total value

But the best feature of Club Ultima is the total value it offers for the superb facilities and the warm, congenial distinctly personal service of the club's Cebuano staff—all of which come at very reasonable rates. Such innovative architectural design promises to pamper residents and guests with a revolving view of the entire Metro Cebu. This makes Club Ultima truly a perfect place to come to.

Club Ultima is located on Osmeña Boulevard, Cebu City. Inquiries and reservations, call 032-418-7777 and 032-255-0155.

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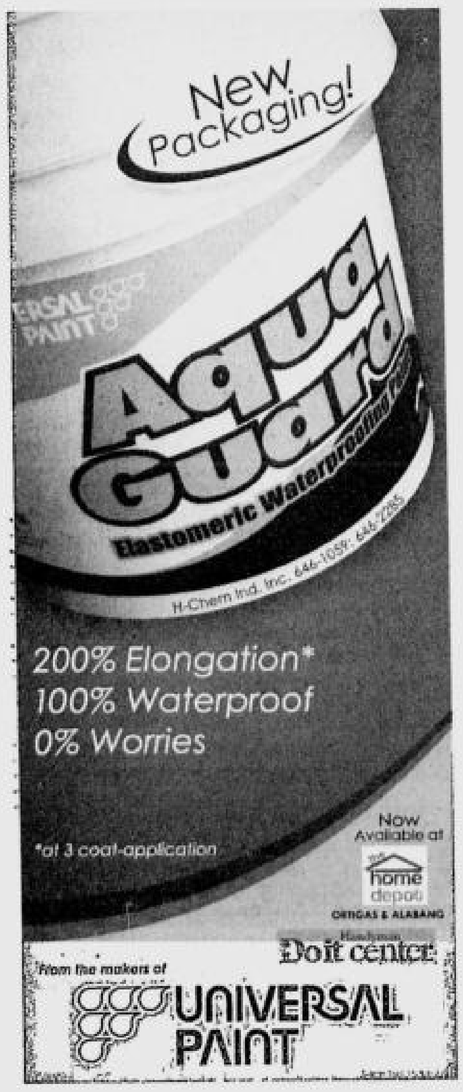


Seaside living

LIVING ARCHITECTURE

Marcos de Guzman Jr.

THE PHILIPPINES BOASTS OF over 7,100 islands. This translates to thousands of miles of coastline; meaning, potentially, long stretches of backyard beaches! Finally we are beginning to notice and realize the great alternative lifestyle this setup allows.

The tourism industry had been encouraging the development of beach resorts ever since the first picnic basket was unpacked on our shores. After several years, forward-thinking developers discovered that there is a public out there who would want to stay on the beach longer than a picnic basket's worth of meals.

There is a substantial group of people who would like to immerse in the beach ambience 24/7. To address this sector, enterprising brokers began offering seaside properties and beach rights on long-term lease. But now, innovative developers are doing one better and building residential communities along the coast, giving full-time beach lovers a corner of their Eden.

Fast disappearing

The old dilemma of living away from the city is fast disappearing since technology has allowed the more sophisticated workers to hold office anywhere they want. They can stay in touch with family, friends and business associates with the click of a few buttons, while in the comfort of their homes. What's more, inspiration comes easy when you are relaxed, facing a magnificent view, communing with nature, breathing fresh air, and far away from the stress of the city. The great strides in technology and communication are definite plus factors to the development of seaside communities. It is also the reason the availability of such features is a major consideration in any such development.

Currently, those who acquire seaside properties are those who already have homes in the city and can afford to have a second home or a vacation house. However, I believe this elitist situation is about to change. Soon there will be a generation whose seaside home would not be merely their second home, but possibly their first and only home of choice, especially if it allows them to enjoy the comforts and technology of the city. This is the emerging market of the ultimate beach-phile, a nature lover with very urbane tastes and ties.

SUNRISE and the Bagacay Lighthouse in Amara, Cebu

Amara development

One such seaside community is now rising around half an hour's ride north of Cebu City, which is the Amara development of both Cebu Holdings and Coastal Highpoint Ventures. The project site was developed around the century-old Bagacay Lighthouse, which they claim makes it one of only 24 lighthouse communities in the world. The Amara aims to uphold a high-end resort ambience amid the well-planned amenities and features the public has come to expect of Ayala Land projects. The subdivision will have a scenic coastal ridge and provision for private jetties and decks for interested homeowners.

Another seaside community is likewise growing along the coastline of Morong, Bataan, known as Anvaya Cove. The Cliffside residential lots have an enviable view of both Subic Bay and the Zambales mountain ranges. The Anvaya development evolves from an integrated master plan, encompassing infrastructure for access, water, wastewater disposal, drainage, power and information communications.

Other seaside projects

There are other grand seaside projects in Batangas at present attracting the beach habitué, such as the Terrazas de Punta Fuego and Kawayan Cove. A common denominator for all these is the relaxing atmosphere, coupled with the accoutrements of city living. Truly, the present day seaside lover cannot do without this modern-day conveniences.

In ancient times, civilizations were born along the waterways, since the water has always been a source of mobility and livelihood. Today, despite the frenetic pace of commerce and modernity, some of us still look to water as a source of renewal and inspiration. In living by the sea, beside water, the source of all life, we can be constantly invigorated, soothed and cleansed.

CONSTRUCTSCOPE

American Standard launches 'Art Escape'

THE WORLD'S BIGGEST BATHROOM fixtures company, American Standard, launched its "Art Escape" promotion that makes building your dream bathroom even more exciting.

On offer as grand prize is a trip to the design capital of the world Paris, with additional prizes being round-trip airfare to Shanghai and Singapore.

Indulge in American Standard's exquisite "Imagine" line, created by Milan-based Ronen Joseph, a rising star in the world of international design-art. "Imagine" brings unprecedented style and comfort to the 21st-century bathroom.

Other must-haves from American Standard are bath suite collections from its stellar design roster, including Marc Newson, Achim Pohl and Tomas Fiegl as well as David Chipperfield.

The American Standard collections feature brass fittings, wash basins, water closets as well as wellness bathtubs, all with patented "Family Health" technology that has established a benchmark for antibacterial hygiene the world over.

Every P3,000 purchase of any American Standard product (regular or discounted price) qualifies you to one raffle coupon. Deadline to join is June 30.

Landco Pacific, Madre Realty joint venture

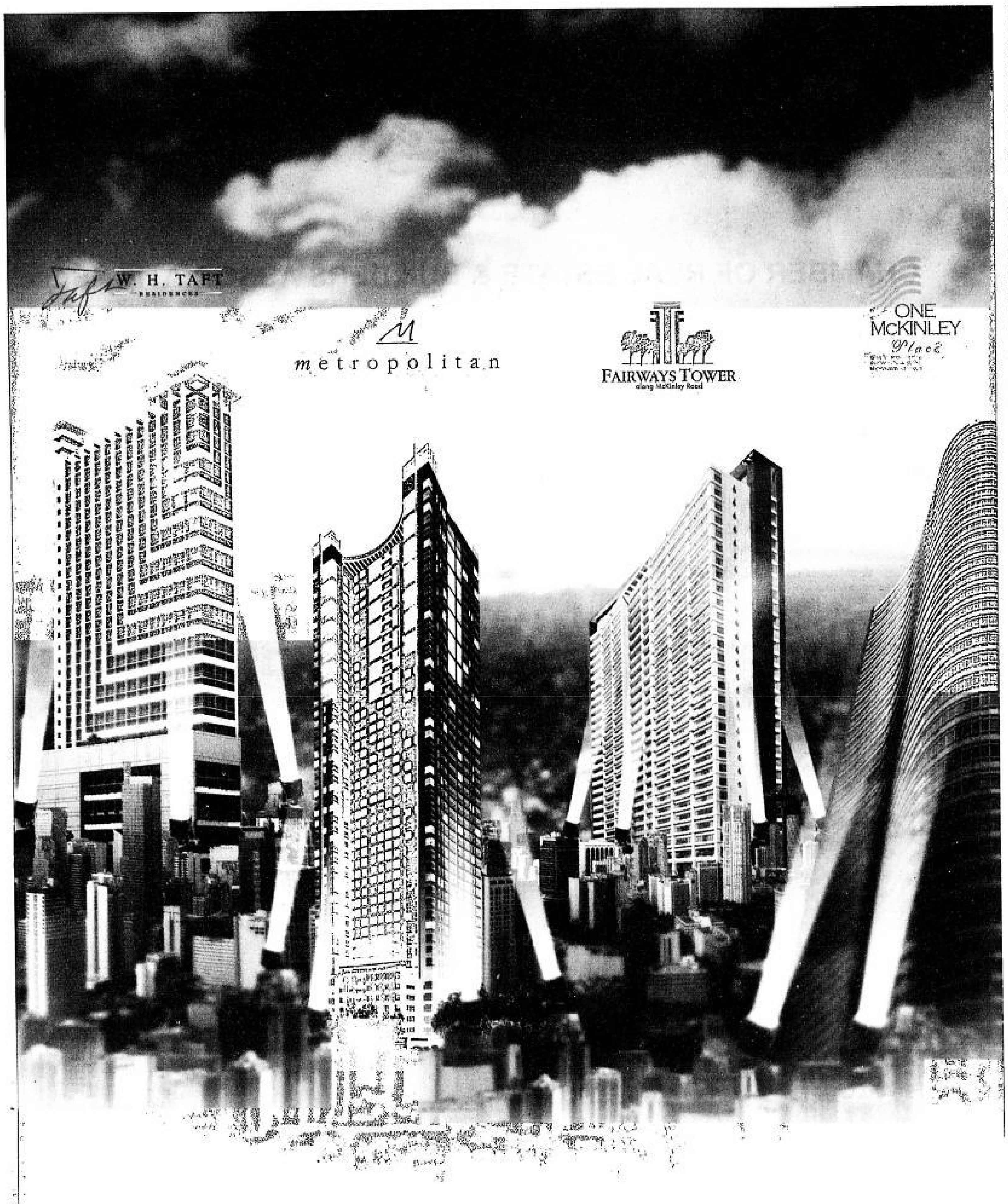
LANDCO PACIIFIC CORP. PRESIDENT and chief executive officer Alfred Xerez-Burgos Jr. and Madre Realty Corp. president Laurito Malinao recently entered a joint venture to include MRC's 7.5-hectare property in Monterrazas de Cebu, a 200-hectare project of LPC and Genvi Development Corp. They were joined by MRC director Marieta Malinao and LPC executive vice president and chief operations officer Francis V. Ceballos.

The joint signing was witnessed by Evelyna Dujon, Madre Realty's chief accountant; and Mike Reyes, LPC vice president and head Vismin.

HCG Bathroom Fixtures joins Conex 2007

HCG, THE LEADING BRAND IN bathroom fixtures, recently joined United Architects of the Philippines' Conex 2007 at the World Trade Center in Pasay City. Conex is intended for construction suppliers to showcase their latest product lines and innovation to UAP members and the public.

HCG displayed at the Conex its newest collection of bathroom fixtures, which has modern design and functionalities.



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Editor Cesar D. Mangawang

PROPERTY

Construction expo slated in Cebu

By Charles E. Buban

ACCORDING TO THE National Economic and Development Authority, enlivening the housing construction sector can spur economic growth and alleviate poverty.

The agency believes that the country should take advantage of the sector's multiplier effect of 16.6 times, which means for every P10 billion worth of housing units, it can contribute a total of P166 billion of economic activity for the country.

"Indeed, this is what we have in mind when we once again organized the 15th Construction Show Cebu. By also doing it in Cebu, we are also recognizing the importance of the Visayas and Mindanao region as a vital contributor plus the fact that this event is very effective in reaching out small to medium players who find Metro Manila a far venue," said Lilibeth Abais, managing director of LA Ducut and Co. Inc., the event organizer.

Largest, longest running

Abais informed that the show (www.constructionshowcebu.com), running from June 1 to 4 at the Cebu Trade Hall in SM City Cebu, is recognized as one of the most successful trade events in the Southern Philippines for being the largest and the longest running annual construction trade show attracting around 40,000 visitors.

"With the Construction Show Cebu's regional setting, visitors will be able to discover new market and develop new linkages. There are so many small and medium-size players in Visayas or Mindanao that are just waiting for the right opportunity and this event hopes to tap them too," said Abais.

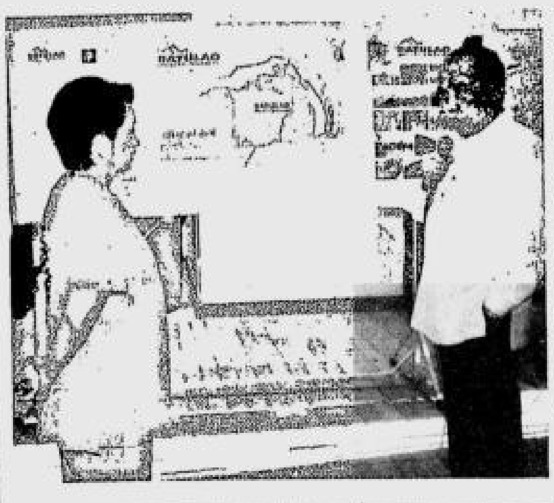
This year, Abais said the event will try to remain attuned with current and future demands of the industry through the showcasing of product innovations and solutions.

International partners

"With the help of our partners, Cemex Philippines (Apo Premium Quality Cement), Bostik Philippines (Fix-All Tile Adhesive), Matimco Inc. (Matwood and Weatherwood), as well as SunStar Publications Network and BusinessWorld, the event also hopes to attract global players who could provide international exposure to exhibitors. In the same way, these global players may also want partners that could help them tap the huge market available here in the Visayas and Mindanao region," Abais said.

The Construction Show Cebu is also held in cooperation with the Hardwares Consolidated Inc., whose members are the major distributors of construction materials in the Southern Philippines.

"These hardware companies have been catalyst to the growth of the sector here in the Visayas and Mindanao. Their group realized that the event will further broaden their network," Abais said.

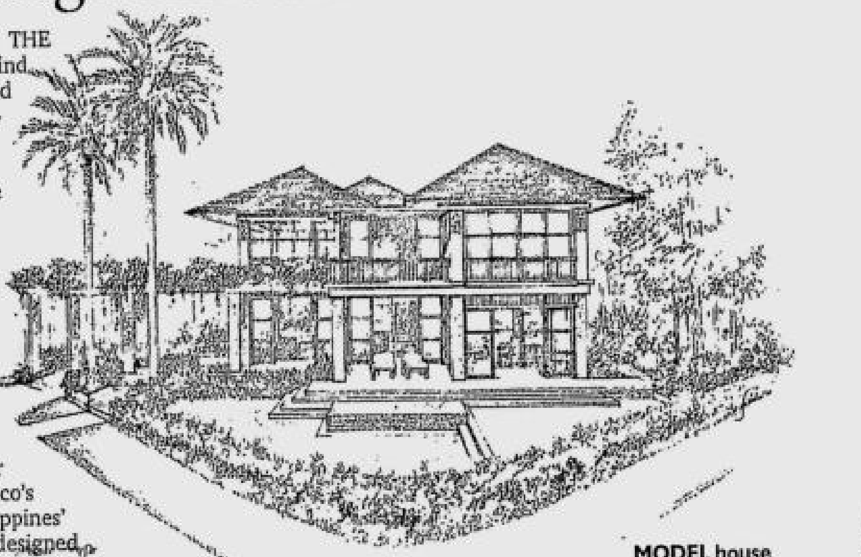


BATULAO MONTE GRANDE
Ambassador Antonio L. Cabangon Chua, a well-known business leader, briefs President Macapagal-Arroyo on his group's developmental plans for its 678-hectare Batulao Monte Grande in Nasugbu, Batangas during her recent visit to the project for Korean retirees that was initiated by the Philippine Retirement Authority. Batulao Monte Grande is conceptualized as a mixed-use mountainview resort town with world-class amenities.

Playa Calatagan model house unveiled

LANDCO PACIFIC CORP., THE real estate company behind some of the most highly touted residential resort developments and most sought-after leisure farms in the Philippines, is set to launch the model house of its latest project, Playa Calatagan.

The model house will be launched in Playa Calatagan, a 92-hectare integrated residential and leisure-tourism beach community in Calatagan, Batangas. A two-and-a-half-hour drive from Manila, Landco's Playa Calatagan is the Philippines' first leisure-tourism estate designed around a beach community. When completed, the development will have seaside residences, retail stores, venues for shopping, dining and entertainment as well as a variety of recreational options.



MODEL house perspective

House features

The features of Playa Calatagan's model house include a cathedral-type ceiling that extends to the second level of the house, huge windows that give residents an unobstructed view of the South China Sea or the mountains of Calatagan, and a jacuzzi-size plunge pool where residents can lounge in. Inspired by indigenous motifs, the model unit is made of vintage or local materials that create a rustic ambience.

Responsible for the design of Playa Calatagan's model house is Noel Saratan, an architect known for advocating an Asian-tropical and contemporary Filipino style of architectural design. "I share Landco's insights and I welcome the opportunity to come up with something innovative that the public will always go back to and enjoy again and again," said Saratan, who also designed Playa Calatagan's garden cabanas, juice bar and grill, and social hall in the beach clubhouse that has an 800-meter river pool.

Realty dev't concept

Playa Calatagan is a concept in real estate development that Landco Pacific pioneered in the country. The real estate company is also behind the success of the widely popular Terrazas de Punta Fuego, Peninsula de Punta Fuego and Amara en Terrazas.

Landco also develops leisure farms, residential units, memorial parks, shopping centers and commercial developments—products that provide superior value to clients, company executives said.

Parties interested in Playa Calatagan may contact Landco Pacific's sales office at (632) 850-0594, e-mail the company at playacalatagan@landcopacific.com, or visit its Web sites at www.playacalatagan.com and www.landcopacific.com.

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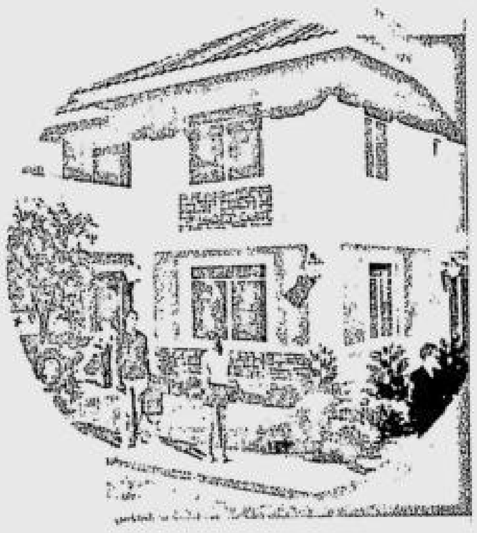

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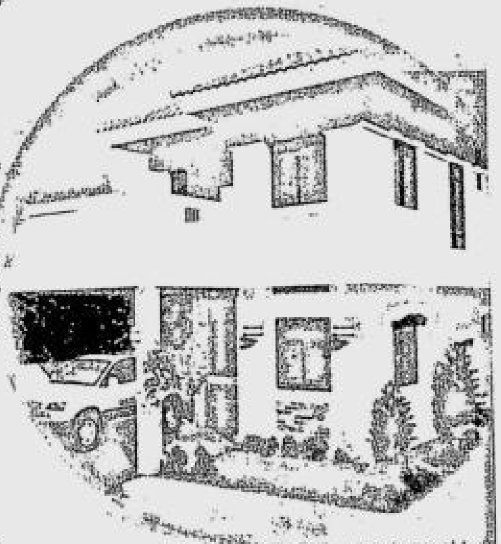

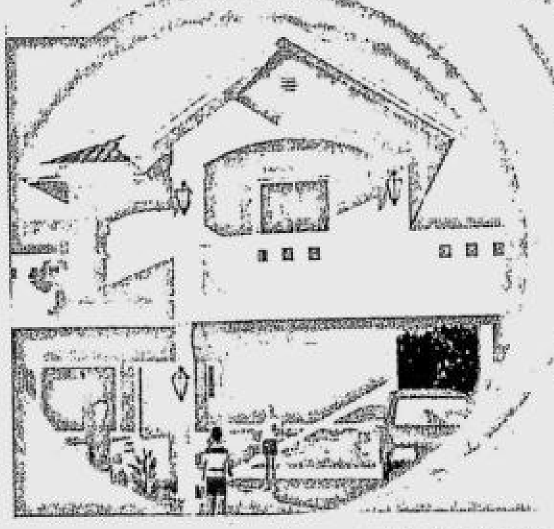

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Ayala Land, Saudi firm partnership to bring world-class hotels to RP

LEADING PROPERTY LEADER AYALA Land Inc. has entered into a joint partnership with Kingdom Hotel Investment to build a $153-million luxury hotel complex that will rise in the Makati central business district.

A leading global property firm, KHI owns interests in 33 properties in 19 countries. It focuses on the first-class market segment in international high-growth markets such as the Middle East, Asia, Africa and Europe.

Meeting

KHI chair, Saudi Prince Alwaleed bin Talal bin Abdulaziz Alsaud of the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, met with Ayala Land executives for the business partnership. His five-hour stay in the country was part of his visit in Asia to scout new properties for KHI.

The joint venture will develop a 7,377-square-meter property on Makati Avenue corner Pasay Road into a luxury center comprised of a 300-room Fairmont Hotel, a 30-suite Raffles Hotel, and 189 Raffles-branded private residences.

With its million-dollar development cost, the project is credited as the single biggest hotel-related investment in local business history. It is 20 percent owned by Ayala Land and 80 percent by KHI, but Ayala Land also "plans to establish a landholding company, to be owned 60 percent by Ayala Land and 40 percent by KHI, through a wholly owned subsidiary," according to Ayala Land chief finance officer Jaime Ysmael.

Key component

The upscale hotel and residences complex is a key component of Ayala Center's redevelopment into a world-class business destination. Ayala Center's makeover, which includes the development of business process outsourcing (BPO) office buildings and another hotel, is just one of the 33 new projects Ayala Land has lined up this year.

Ayala Land's landmark team-up with KHI shows Prince Alwaleed's confidence in the country's economy. "Makati City continues to establish itself as the leading business destination in the Philippines [and] we are delighted to partner with Ayala Land, one of Asia's most respected and established developers," said the Prince, the world's 13th richest man according to Forbes magazine.

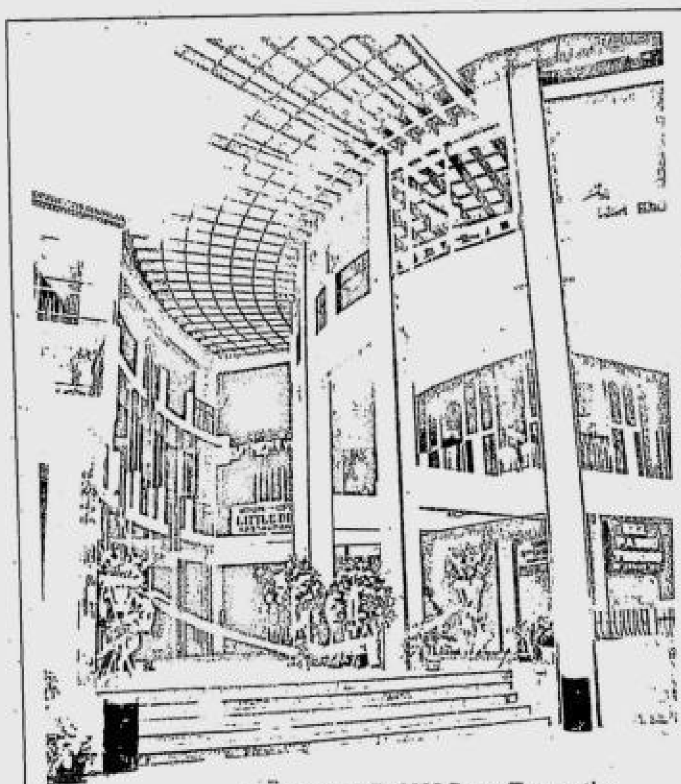
Growing demand

The Philippines has been ranked by the World Travel and Tourism Council as one of the fastest growing tourism and travel markets in Asia and Kingdom Hotel-Makati is expected to benefit from the growing demand for luxury accommodation in the region.

"The Fairmont Makati Hotel and Raffles Suites and Residences will enable KHI to generate attractive returns by combining a significant amount of branded residential development with premium hotel brands," said Sarmad Zok, KHI chief executive officer.

Canada-based Fairmont Raffles Hotels International Inc. owns and manages 120 hotels in 25 countries under four brands—Fairmont Hotels and Resorts, Raffles Hotels and Resorts, Swissôtel Hotels and Resorts and Delta Hotels.

Tesoro's Group launches 822 Paseo Tesoro



THE FACADE of 822 Paseo Tesoro, the newest Tesoro building at 822 A. Arnaiz Ave., Makati

TESORO'S GROUP OF COMPANIES, THE family corporation that operates the Tesoro's Philippine handicrafts stores, Tesoro's Export and Tesoro's Realty recently inaugurated its latest project, the 822 Paseo Tesoro on Arnaiz Avenue in Makati.

The event also commemorated the 92nd anniversary of its matriarch and co-founder, the late Salud S. Tesoro. Guests of honor were Sen. Mar Roxas and Makati Mayor Jejomar Binay.

Even before the building's completion, inquiries to lease were already pouring in. According to Group CEO Ma. Isabel "Beng" Tesoro, tenants who snapped up the leasable spaces were drawn by the unique and cutting-edge design of the building.

Group CEO Tesoro gives credit to the successful teamwork of Tesoro's Realty with building designer Jonathan Gan and Associates, the construction firm Cardrian Builders and project manager Design XI.

---

8 reasons to choose the Gramercy Residences at Century City

TIRED OF THE DAILY MORNING traffic? Stressed at the sight of the colorless concrete jungle? Can't find a living space that will give you the best of both urban conveniences and nature's soothing touch?

Visionary developer Century Properties will put an end to these and more woes of congested urban living through Century City, its latest evolutionary development that will soon rise in the heart of Makati.

A "city within a city" that embraces a new kind of "Artchitecture" as inspired by the unique symbiosis of nature and technology, this highly anticipated project will comprise ultra-exclusive residential towers, state-of-the-art corporate office buildings with bespoke interiors, a luxury hotel, a recreational club, and an organic lifestyle and entertainment complex.

Century City's centerpiece is its cluster of residential towers that trace their inspiration from some of the world's greatest cities. First to rise among them is The Gramercy Residences, a New York-inspired architectural masterpiece that conjures up the spirit of the Big Apple's high-rise energy and exciting Manhattan lifestyle.

Here are 8 more reasons The Gramercy Residences may just be the perfect address for you.

1 **Perfect location.** Rising in the very the heart of the Philippines' Central Business District, The Gramercy Residences at Century City is located in what is now being called "MoMa," or "Modern Makati." Long renowned as the epicenter of Philippine social, cultural and financial activity, Makati is constantly evolving and reinvigorating itself, transforming into a true megalopolis that is poised to compete with other urban centers all over the world.

Choosing Makati by making your home at The Gramercy is therefore the best investment you can make since your residence will be situated on the last remaining large piece of prime real estate in the country's premiere financial and business capital-home to a total of 62,878 establishments, including 461 head offices of banks, over 30 major IT companies, 27 contact centers, four historic churches, over 100 educational institutions, five-star hotels, the biggest and most upscale shopping malls and entertainment centers, and the country's most exclusive villages.

2 **Hyper-amenitized.** Some of the amenities, services and features at The Gramercy Residences have never been attempted anywhere else in the world. One such attraction is the sprawling and breathtaking Sky Park with three-story waterfalls, three types of pools (multi-level infinity pools, lagoon pools, a children's pool), a designer café and restaurant, a health club, a garden island within a reflecting pool. The Sky Park will rise halfway up the residential buildings, traversing each one, 30 stories above the ground.

Other first-rate amenities at The Gramercy are a day-care center, a 24-hour fitness center with three kinds of gyms, rooms for yoga and Pilates, a centralized juice bar, a residents' lounge, a THX theater and a DVD library, café/restaurant, a conference room with global communication equipment, a wine bar and storage, and a library/book club.

3 **Fully fitted, fully furnished and fully serviced units.** All units at The Gramercy will carry the highly acclaimed fully fitted, fully furnished and fully serviced concept that Century Properties pioneered. It will also take bespoke living to the next level with five interior design options in studio, one-bedroom, two-bedroom, three-bedroom and loft configurations to allow you to truly personalize your future home.

4 **Cosmopolitan living, 24/365.** Inspired by the city that never sleeps (New York), The Gramercy Residences will introduce the 24 by 365 dynamic—the same lifestyle that the entire Century City shall espouse, where shops, restaurants and bars will be open late, and most services will be accessible 24 hours a day, 365 days of the year. Have your food delivered to your unit from any of Century City's world-famous restaurants any time you want. Get a relaxing massage after a tiring workday, even at 2 a.m. Or should your Internet connection, PC or home entertainment system break down, technicians are on call round the clock.

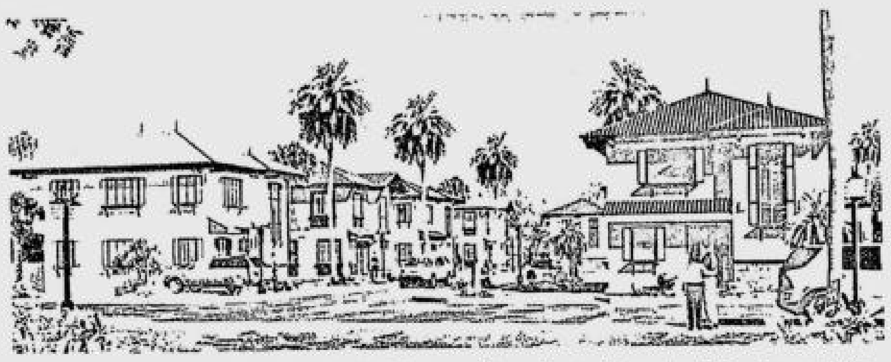
5 **A seamless environment in a sustainable green development.** Enjoy the limitless conveniences of living in a seamless environment, where live, work and play amenities are just a short stroll or elevator ride away. The entire 4.8-hectare development will comprise state-of-the-art corporate office buildings, an IT school, a luxury hotel, and a glassed-in complex featuring world-renowned restaurants, upscale boutiques and top-of-the-line entertainment facilities.

Century City's integrated design also makes it a sustainable green development. With a shorter supply chain and the lesser need to commute or drive, the entire community produces less carbon emissions and saves fuel. Not to mention that its nature-inspired design will transform the entire development into an "oasis of green" amid the concrete city. Traffic congestion will also be avoided through road widening efforts and new traffic schemes.

6 Designed by architectural masters. In order to realize its vision to create "a completely fresh and progressive structural landmark in the Philippines," Century Properties formed a creative team of pioneering and world-class professionals that includes Jon Adams Jerde, founder of The Jerde Partnership International and the master-planning genius behind Universal Citywalk in California, the Bellagio Hotel in Las Vegas, Roppongi Hills in Tokyo and many other architectural masterpieces. Its local counterpart is Palafox Associates, the premier Filipino architectural, planning and design firm behind the award-winning Al-Khobar Complex Center in Dubai, the Rabat Waterfront Development in Morocco and the Tala Marina Club City in Saudi Arabia among other prestigious developments in the Philippines.

7 **Developed by Century Properties.** With 21 years of experience in real estate development, Century Properties has built a solid track record in delivering all of its projects on time, in the highest quality and with remarkable innovations. Included in its roster of premiere developments is the ultra-exclusive and award-winning Essensa East Forbes, South of Market at the Fort, Grand Soho Makati in the heart of the Makati Golden Triangle, and Soho Central. Both Soho Central and South of Market are projected to be completed one year ahead of schedule, assuring future residents and buyers of Century developments that their investments are in trustworthy hands.

8 **Maintained by Century Properties Management Inc.** The Gramercy Residences and the entire Century City will be placed under the experienced care of Century Properties Management Inc. (CPMI), the largest private property management firm in the country with an impressive portfolio of 54 residential, office and mixed-use buildings. This ensures residents that the value of their investments would only increase, and that their units will be well-maintained for many, many years.



THE SUBURBAN lifestyle in Earth+Style's township projects offers a traditional way of life, where ample spaces and greenery are a given and where communities provide a nurturing ambiance for families seeking to grow in a much more wholesome environment.

Earth+Style merges urban amenities with rural setting

THE PAST YEARS HAVE SEEN A STEADY increase of high-rise developments within the bustling metropolis, as companies vie to provide prime residential options amid the cramped quarters of Metro Manila.

Providing a steady stream of amenities and conveniences that are geared toward enhancing the lifestyles of cosmopolitans, these high-end condominiums helped introduce a new level of urban living for those who desire to live within the busy streets of the country's vibrant metropolitan landscape.

But despite the popularity of these high-rise residential towers, some middle-income urbanites still crave for a traditional way of life, where ample spaces and greenery are a given and where communities provide a nurturing ambiance for families seeking to grow in a much more wholesome environment.

Flourishing home villages

Earth+Style Corp., the country's premier lifestyle developer for the middle-income market, answers this call by creating innovative developments that successfully combine urban amenities and conveniences with a rural township setting.

"Earth+Style's guiding philosophy has always been to allow the Filipino families' dreams to unfold, by providing them with flourishing home villages that are ideal venues to nurture and raise families," said Geraldine S. Gibe, head for the Communication Resource Group of Earth+Style.

Harnessing the concept of a suburb village, where homes have more space and privacy for families, and where kids have the freedom to run around and play, Earth+Style developed the master plan for their township projects, set in the tranquil and slow-paced setting of Biñan in Laguna and in its developments in neighboring Cavite.

Easy extravagance

"The Earth+Style lifestyle developments breath of fresh air. Here, our residents enjoy the conveniences offered by city living which basically is proximity to amenities, as well as a certain degree of liberation, in an environment where they can truly settle down and relax after a day of stress-filled work in the city. And because it is only a short drive away from various establishments, the advantage of escaping into a peaceful community where one can rejuvenate, revitalize and reenergize in the comfort of one's home surroundings is an easy extravagance we provide in this day and age of fast-paced modernity," Gibe said.

It is worthy of note that aside from the obvious perks afforded by a suburban home, Earth+Style introduced further enhancements to the community by extending the mere development of homes into a township. Earth and Style's develops townships because it believes in celebrating the Filipino families' sociable nature, contentedly thriving when among friends.

Modern amenities

Among the lifestyle amenities offered in the township projects is its welcoming clubhouse, which includes a multipurpose hall, big terraces and a park, among other things, that supports the Filipinos' sociable nature and fondness for gatherings.

EARTH+Style suburban villages allow more freedom for the family, for leisurely runs through the community part or simply for kids to enjoy playing safely all day long.

A resort plaza that features a swimming pool and sun lounge can offer enjoyable hours of bonding with family members and fellow residents.

A sports plaza adds a fitness perk for the health conscious, with basketball courts that are the perfect place for neighborhood friends to get together and have fun.

Kids and parents alike can take pleasure in fun-filled hours at the playground and parks at the heart of the township. The parks also double as serene venues where one can savor quiet walks or energetic early morning jogs before going to work.

A community chapel, just a short walk away from one's home, also provides a religious sanctuary for families who value Sunday prayer as one of their weekend activities.

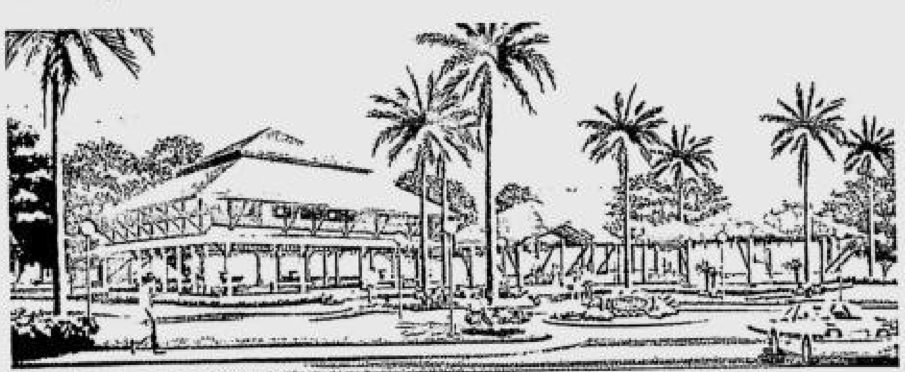
And at the corners of the development, small commercial complexes offer shopping and dining conveniences, bringing in a touch of urban living to the new, growing community.

Lifestyle developments

The suburban lifestyle that Earth+Style perfected in its township projects also reflects the family's need to adapt to new trends. Earth+Style home designs are interestingly themed, inspired by American, Italian and Mediterranean concepts, at the same time capturing the personal preferences of our new generation residents.

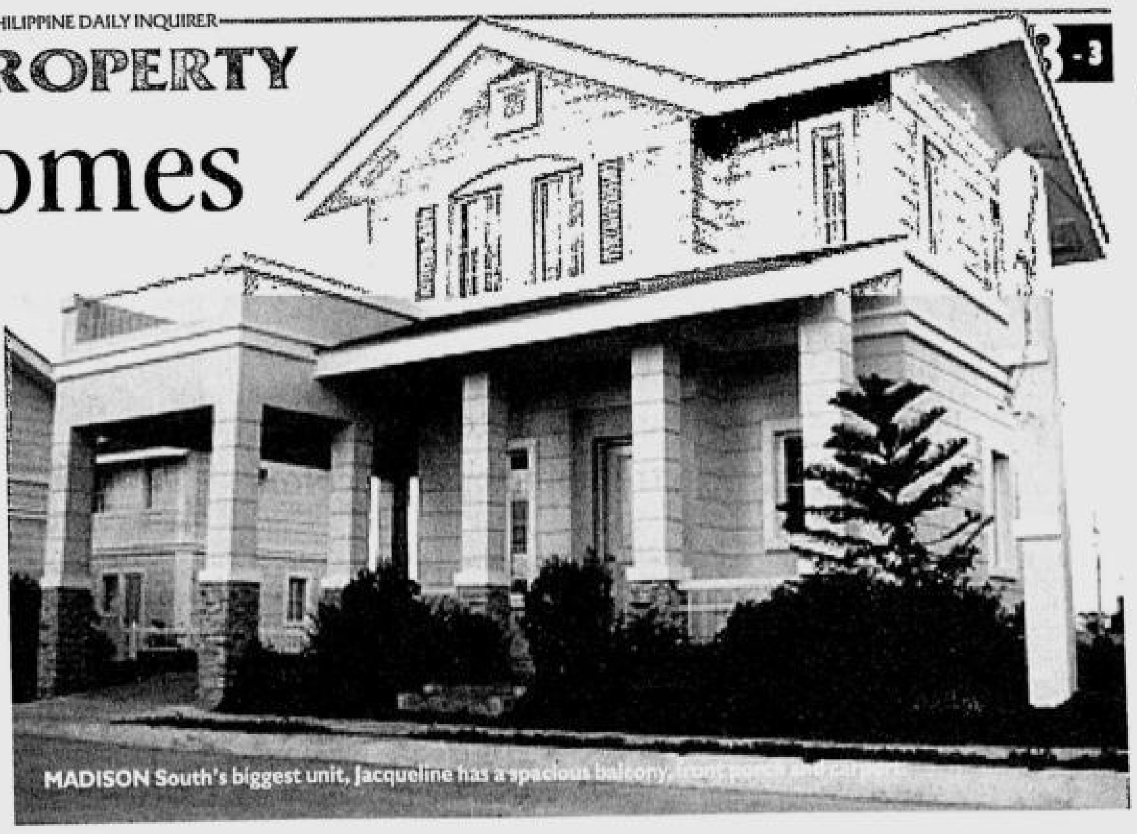
"Being more than a property developer, the total formula where Earth+Style bases the creation of its communities echoes what is called lifestyle development. This lifestyle is in recognition of the fact that modern Filipino families are interested to see the new and the different, but in their core still hold the same traditional Filipino values," Gibe said.

For inquiries about the Earth+Style Township, call 638-85-58 or 0918-88-STYLE or visit www.earthandstyle.com.



THE CLUBHOUSE, an integral lifestyle amenity in Earth+Style's township project, features a multipurpose hall, big terraces and a park that is perfect for social gatherings.

Building dream homes for Filipinos


MADISON South's biggest unit, Jacqueline has a spacious balcony, front porch and carport.

EVERY FILIPINO ASPIRES TO BUILD his/her dream home in a perfect location that's conveniently near amenities, safe, unpolluted and surrounded by nature.

Real estate development and consultancy firm Excore builds homes and communities that are a haven for many Filipinos. It uniquely showcases Filipino talents who are the best in their fields and are reliable experts in real estate planning.

Wide range of services

Excore offers a wide range of services which provide access to expertise in real estate undertaking such as market research, conceptual development planning, project implementation and operational support. Under the company are six of the country's leading real estate developers, each of which is exceptionally renowned in its respective fields of project development.

Phoenix Land Inc. is a company involved in commercial and residential resort projects that epitomize high standard of living. One of its prestigious projects is the Las Haciendas Resort farms in Laurel, Batangas. Las Haciendas boasts of vast areas where one can enjoy various activities such farming and equestrian (Hacienda Verde), sports and equestrian (Hacienda Montana), camping and outdoor activities (Hacienda Rio), as well as lakeside and water sports (Hacienda Lagos).

60-room condo hotel

In the heart of the estate is Casas Sonrisas, a 60-room condominium hotel that provides the comforts of home and personalized service of a professionally managed hotel.

A real estate development company, dedicated to the design and delivery of high-quality and high-value residential communities is Excelsis Land Inc. Its pioneering project Madison South, is a 14.5-hectare village, located in Calamba City, Laguna. The village has the American suburban lifestyle for its theme, complete with amenities such as a clubhouse, a basketball court, a swimming pool and a kiddie playground along landscaped paths. Excelsis Land offers affordable house and lots, open lots and commercial lots—all of which are available under easy financing terms.

In the development of high-yielding affordable and quality real estate projects for the average Filipino family, Landworks Asia Inc. has strived to develop real estate projects that contribute to nation–building and improvement of the socio-economic environment. Monte Brisa, the company's leading project, is a 10-hectare, mid-end themed residential subdivision located in the heart of Montalban, Rizal. A Spanish-Mediterranean themed subdivision, Monte Brisa offers residential, commercial lots as well as house and lot packages complemented by a variety of amenities, which include a community clubhouse, basketball court, swimming pool, children's playground and landscaped park.

Quality, affordable homes

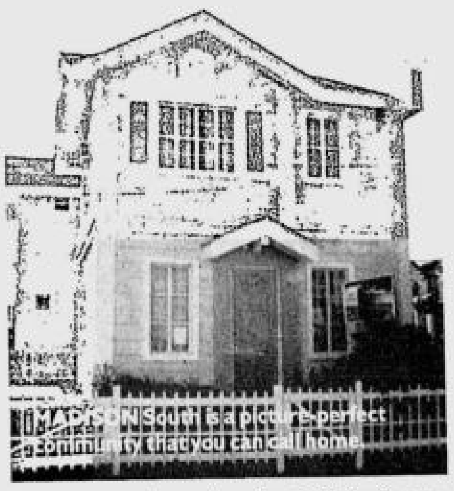
Another real estate developer also involved in providing quality and affordable homes for every Filipino family is Landmark Communities Inc. Its leading project is Summer Hills, a-19 hectare residential area in Lipa City, Batangas. The development features three distinct communities: Sunnyvale (open lot development), Palmdale (low-cost townhouse development) and Rosewood (socialized housing).

Silverstar HomeBuilders Inc. offers quality, excellent and innovative homes and communities. Its lead project is the Tierra Solana, a 150-hectare Spanish-Mediterranean-inspired township community located in General Trias, Cavite. When completed, this township development will have its own public market, village center, transport terminal, school, church and memorial park, all catered to endure the conveniences of modern living.

MADISON SOUTH
MADISON South's Nancy model home is designed with high ceiling and spacious living room ideal for families.

Columbarium segment

Lastly, primed to be the market leader in the growing columbarium segment of the memorial industry, Caelum Developers Inc. seeks to offer quality and affordable repository for the cremated remains and provide worry-free maintenance as well as the convenience of having the option to bring home urns of loved ones. The company's flagship project is the Ascension Columbary, a 4,265-square-meter property with 3 columbarium buildings with a total inventory of 28,000 vaults. Located on Araneta Avenue, Quezon City, it is in the heart of Metro Manila accessible from several key cities like San Juan, Manila and Mandaluyong.


MADISON South is a picture-perfect community that you can call home.

Excore group of companies provides a total business solution in real estate development. Not only do they build better homes and communities for Filipinos, but they also wear Filipino pride on their sleeves, which can be clearly seen through their commitment in various community projects that holistically contribute in building the nation and improving the country's socio-economic environment. Being more than just consultants, specialists and expert, Excore is your life partner committed to making your dream homes into reality.

Megaworld launches McKinley Hill Stamford Executive Residences Tower 2

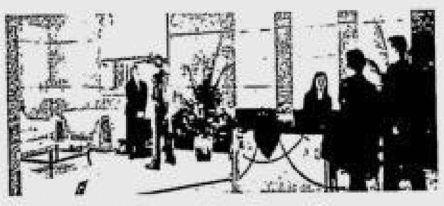
A NEW ELEGANT LIFESTYLE IS THE SIMplest promise of Stamford Executive Residences, a three-tower residential condominium by top developer Megaworld Corp. located within the sprawling 50-hectare McKinley Hill in Fort Bonifacio. Shortly after its launch, Stamford quickly attracted buyers well enough to sell out the first tower almost immediately. Now, the second tower is fast attracting more and more sensible people looking for that perfect place to settle at the end of a frenetic day at work.

The McKinley Hill community in itself offers great promise, lying within the rising fun and play hub of Fort Bonifacio. It offers immediate access to destinations, easily connecting to the business districts of Makati through the Upper McKinley Road, and even Ortigas through C-5. The high-tech office building One World Square, at the main entrance to McKinley Hill, is also just a walk away, promising a relaxing stroll home after a day's work. Gone are the days when convenience had to be sacrificed to enjoy a relaxing and refreshing community.

High-end residential condo

Stamford is a high-end residential condominium blessed with modern privileges to make life more fun and comfortable for young career-driven individuals and couples. The 18-story building towers over virtually bucolic scenery that soothes and comforts its residents, the way homes should. Designed with the modern young professionals in mind, Stamford offers tranquility in the midst of modernity.

WITH THE STRONG uptake of Tower 1, Megaworld recently launched Stamford Executive Residences Tower 2 in McKinley Hill, Fort Bonifacio.


THE LOBBY of Stamford Executive Residences Tower 2 is both elegant and modern.

Stamford is not just a place to settle within comfortable walls at the end of the day, though it can very well do that. Its ground floor features fabulous retail shops for a convenient shopping stop when the urge or need arises. Dining places, cafés, service outlets and more shops are easily within reach at the McKinley Hill town center, too.

Resort-style ambiance

If you want to relax in a resort-style ambiance and take in some fresh air, or simply feel the glorious morning sun on your skin, landscaped gardens and a swimming pool with sunbathing lounge are at the roof deck to pamper yourself with your own quiet time. Of course, this may also be enjoyed in the company of friends and loved ones.

Each Stamford unit speaks of exquisite features and well-planned layouts designed by the industry's most talented architects and designers. A cozy and elegant 22- to 32-square-meter studio features wood grain vinyl planks in the kitchen, living, dining and sleeping areas. The modular cabinetry of the kitchen speaks of remarkable modernity and convenience.

Modern amenities

All the modern amenities one would expect in a condominium are brilliantly present at Stamford. A graceful entrance lobby impressively welcomes residents and guests. Two remarkable high-speed elevators transport residents up and down the elegant tower in no time.

True to Megaworld's promise of "Live-Work-Play-Learn," which has earlier been proven highly successful in the company's pioneering Eastwood City, a commercial strip is planned to rise soon within McKinley Hill adding to the appeal of Stamford and the other residences in the community. In addition, top international schools and colleges, and even international embassies have chosen to make these placid hills their new home, completing the synergy of a total community devoted to quality living.

To experience the promise of tranquility in the midst of modernity yourself, call 815-1888 for more information on how to invest in a Stamford Executive Residences Tower 2.

A deal of a lifetime at Edsa Grand Residences

A CONDO UNIT AT THE HEART OF THE metropolis for P10,588 a month may well be the ultimate sale of the year!

Situated in close proximity to Quezon City's educational, leisure, medical and shopping complexes such as SM North Edsa, condo buyers will have a hard time imagining a better deal than Edsa Grand Residences, the city's newest high-rise commercial and residential tower.

Edsa Grand Residences, located on Edsa corner Corregidor Street, Quezon City, recently broke ground.

This prime property is ideal for overseas Filipino workers (OFWs) and local buyers thinking of the best way to save and grow their hard-earned money through wise investing. OFWs can also use this ideally located prime property whenever they are in the country or have it rented for a very good rate whenever they are away.

Value-added features, amenities

When fully-built by 2010, this condominium masterpiece will pack value-added features and amenities to the delight of its unit owners such as a grand lobby, commercial shops at the lower and upper ground floors, a swimming pool and children wading pool, a sauna and fitness center, a multipurpose hall and a function room.

Each of its units will likewise be equipped with individual house entry phone systems, individual doorbells (for residential units) while an automated vehicular traffic system will be installed to ensure safety.

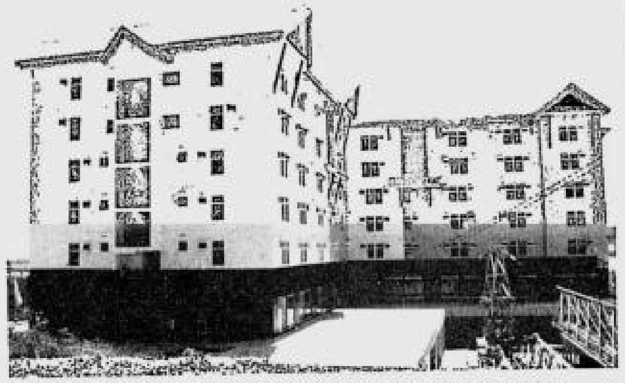
Aside from owning a unit here for only P10,588 in monthly amortization—arguably the most affordable in the market for its class—this 30-story condo will be also equipped with three high-speed elevators, a cistern and overhead water tanks, waste-disposal facilities and a power generator to deal with power outages.

For added protection to its residents, a round-the-clock security will be put in place to complement the building's state-of-the-art closed-circuit TV and monitoring system aside from a fire-protection and sprinkler system and a fire alarm and detection devices installed in each of its units.

Recognition

Its developer, Edsa Grand Realty and Development Corp., has been recognized as the Most Outstanding Affordable Residential Condo Developer given by the Philippine Marketing Excellence Awards Institute, Marketing Insights Magazine, and the Asian Institute of Marketing and Entrepreneurship in a recent Philippine Marketing Excellence Awards ceremony.

Detailed information on Edsa Grand Residences and Adriatico Grand Residences is available at www.edsagrand.com or you may contact Clarisse at 4564750 or 09175396888 and look for Khadine.


THE COMPLETED first phase of Centropolis Communities represents another milestone for TKRL, with high-end features like 2.6-meter ceiling height, beamless and column-free layouts, base modular kitchen cabinets and wood grain vinyl plank flooring.

Centropolis Communities now ready for turnover

CENTROPOLIS COMMUNITIES, the one-hectare, self-contained lifestyle community developed by TKRL Realty and Development Corp. in Sucat, Muntinlupa, is now ready for turnover to unit-owners and buyers as the finishing touches for its first residential building are being completed.

The completed residential building is only the first of four residential structures that comprise the entire community, with the remaining 75 percent scheduled for completion within the next 48 months.

Already prospective buyers and current owners can get to view and appreciate the sophisticated design and functionality of the first building, a fitting precursor to the remaining three structures that embrace a contemporary Asian-inspired approach.

Another milestone

"The completion of the first building for Centropolis Communities represents another milestone for TKRL," said Philip Lim, chief operations officer of the development firm. "It clearly shows that our company can deliver on its promise of quality development, while ensuring the satisfaction, comfort and security of its future homeowners," he added.

While the formal building inauguration has been scheduled by the company in May, unit-owners can already move in to their condos as early as April.

High-end features

The high-end features of their units, like the 2.6-meter ceiling height, beamless and column-free layouts, base modular kitchen cabinets and wood grain vinyl plank flooring also open up a lot of possibilities for the new unit owner as they set about making their new home inside Centropolis.

While new residents of Centropolis will have to wait a short while longer to enjoy the full range of amenities to be offered by the emerging lifestyle community, they can already enjoy what it means to live at the center of it all with only a 15-minute drive to Makati City, the business districts of Madrigal Business Park, Fort Bonifacio Global City and the Filinvest Corporate City.

Accessible

Malls and entertainment centers are also just a short trip away, with Centropolis offering easy access to Alabang Town Center, Metropolis, SM Sucat, Filinvest Festival Mall and Dutyfree.

Anticipating the impact of the property on the lifestyle and residential landscape, only 25 percent of the units in the Centropolis Communities Building 1 are available for purchase. The choices range from the 19.25-sq-m one-bedroom unit and the 38.5-sq-m two-bedroom and the 57.75-sq-m three-bedroom units, priced between P850,000 and P2.485 million.

"Centropolis Communities represents TKRL's highest standard of quality and the highest testament to what cosmopolitan living is all about," Lim stated.

For more inquiries on Centropolis Communities, call 885-7530 or visit www.tkrl.net.

Posadas-Brittany Bay opens new Duetto unit

MAVERICK REAL ESTATE DEVELOPER BRITTANY Corp. has further expanded its San Francisco-inspired Victorianne development. With more and more Filipinos now embracing the bohemian lifestyle of this historic United States city, a new Duetto model unit within its new Victorianne area has now been made available for this growing market.

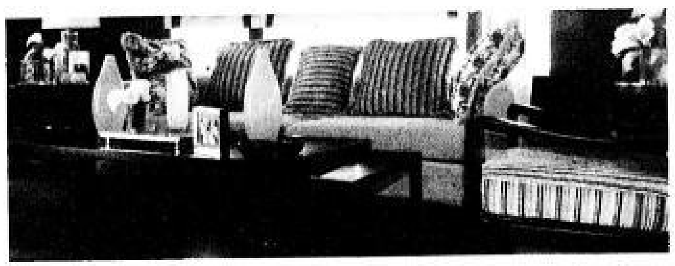
The new Duetto proudly takes its place in Brittany Bay, a masterplanned development in partnership with the landed Marfori-Posadas family. Pioneered by Doña Estela Marfori Posadas of the illustrious Marfori-Posadas clan, she introduced what would be a legacy of excellence in developing residential communities in the area.

The Brittany Bay masterplan

The picturesque community of Brittany Bay affords residents the luxuries of vibrant living, a comfortable proximity from the airport and the Makati Business District, and a neighboring themed commercial complex filled with dining and entertainment options.

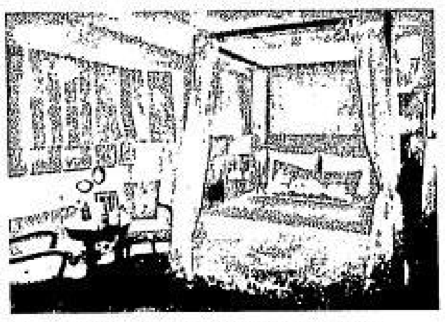
> The new Duetto incorporates the trademark pastel colors

THE NEW Duetto [illegible] to [illegible] up.



THE LIVING room's chocolate finish with pastel accents makes for a welcoming space.

With over 60 hectares brimming with promise and potential, Brittany Bay's masterplan will include a central business district with a boutique hotel as well as business offices, call centers and various commercial and institutional establishments. It is the only masterplanned and themed inner city development closest to Makati and The Fort that offers a stunning 180-degree view of the Laguna de Bay and Sierra Madre mountains. Indeed, Brittany Bay's future is so grand, it is set to eclipse current developments in scope and innovation.



EARTHY hues and wide windows of the master's bedroom provide luxurious calm.

A rising demand

With Brittany Corp.'s grand vision for Brittany Bay, it was inevitable for Victorianne, with its charming Victorian architecture and strategic location, to become popular among those seeking residence in the south. The public's enthusiastic response heralded the opening of an expansion area.

"We opened another enclave in response to market demand for uniquely designed townhomes. The Duetto and the Quadrille combine an inspired architecture with a well-configured interior in a strategically located urban community like Brittany Bay where you get the comforts of suburban living that is only 15 minutes away from the central business district of Makati," said Brittany president Jing Serrano.

Cosmo Duetto

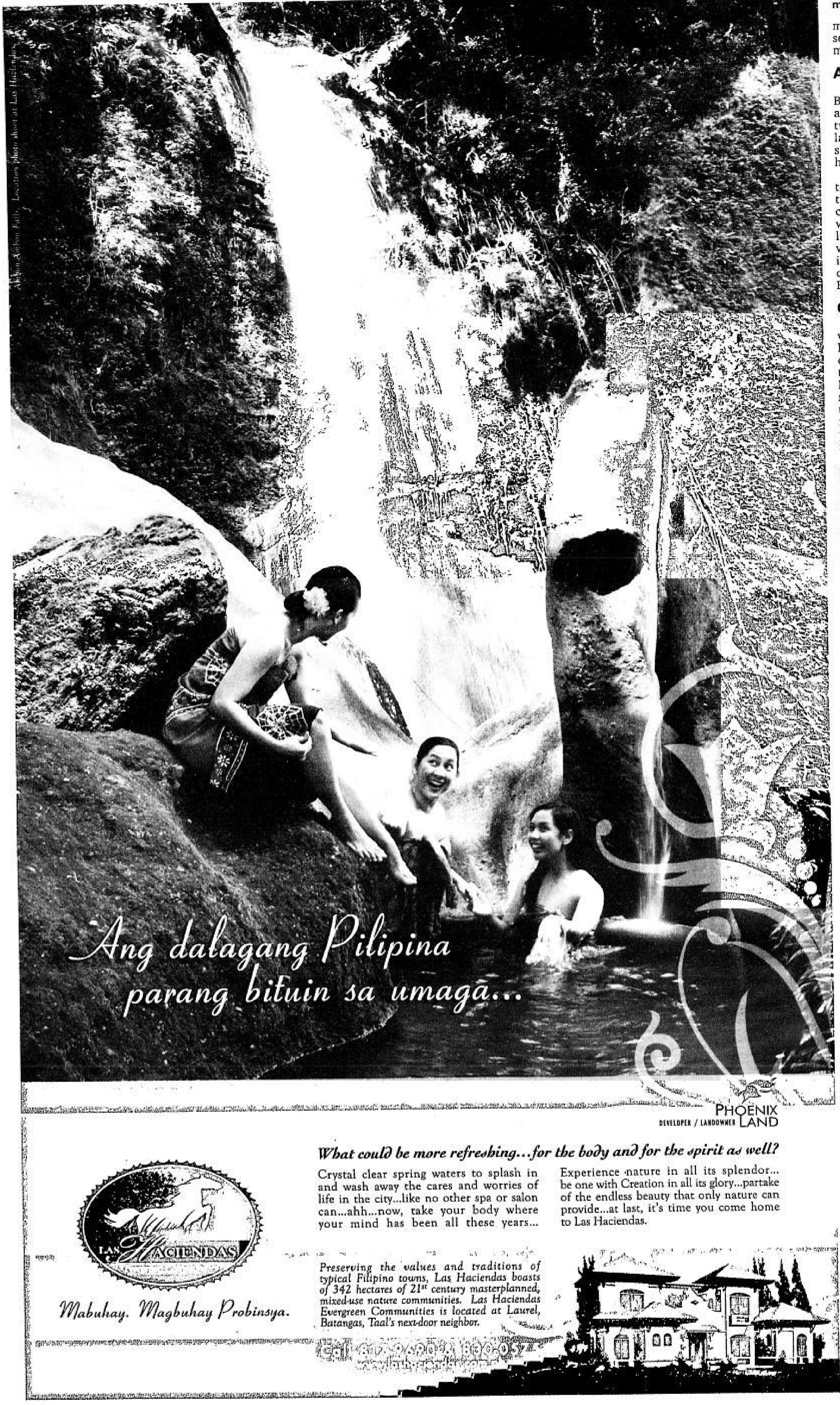
The new Duetto is a four-level structure with two back-to-back units to ensure the homeowners' privacy. Just like the first enclave, the new Duetto incorporates the trademark pastel colors and bay windows. Bolder hues and sleeker finishing lend a cosmopolitan touch to the interiors, giving the traditional Duetto design a refreshingly modern spin. The use of classic and contemporary lines perfectly captures a home that is undoubtedly urban from the inside.

Acclaimed designer Cynthia Almario described their design approach to the new Duetto as "traditional modern," making use of simple lines for furniture and adopting the color forecast for design. Convenient features were likewise added such as a powder room in the second level, stairs that connect the garage into the house, and a design option for a bedroom at the ground floor.

"The expansion of the Victorianne is proof that the market on the lookout for unique properties is growing. And we are pleased that they turn to Brittany Corp. to meet their requirements. This affirms that the painstaking attention we give to details that matter to our clients is an exercise worth taking," said Serrano.

The new Duetto model home at the new Victorianne area will be launched this weekend. For previews and inquiries, please call 850-2868 or 850-3084, or visit www.brittany.com.ph.

Brittany Corporation is a maverick real estate developer of innovative and creative lifescapes. Its eclectic and vibrant portfolio includes Brittany Bay, CrossWinds, Portofino, Georgia Club, Caribe at The Islands, Avant at The Fort and Mosaic at Greenbelt. With masterplanned developments steeped in character, stylistic and thematic appeal, rich architectural details and excellent craftsmanship, it successfully and continuously reinvents the local real estate landscape.


Ambon Ambon Falls. Location photo shot at Las Haciendas
Ang dalagang Pilipina
parang bituin sa umaga...
PHOENIX LAND
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LAS HACIENDAS
Mabuhay. Magbuhay Probinsya.

What could be more refreshing...for the body and for the spirit as well?

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Preserving the values and traditions of typical Filipino towns, Las Haciendas boasts of 342 hectares of 21st century masterplanned, mixed-use nature communities. Las Haciendas Evergreen Communities is located at Laurel, Batangas, Taal's next-door neighbor.

Call [illegible]

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TIRED OF THE PEELING, FADING AND IRRITATING odor of traditional finishes?

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Super
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Super!Countdown
2 days 'til the Vote!

tyle . rban living .
DOR

vote for Mom

Super! follows page C1 **Audrey Zubiri on the campaign trail**

Super! scoop page E4 **Giselle Tongi proudly pregnant with second child**

Who will your mom vote for as the next MTV Vj? page E2

The return of the 'mommy pants' page E1

Are geeks the new trendsetters? page C2

COVER STAR: AUDREY ZUBIRI wearing her campaign jacket

Campaign wishes and electoral dreams

By Paolo Lorenzana

BY NOW, MANY CAN ATTEST to the fast life of Audrey Zubiri—like the roused crowd that's gathered around a makeshift stage at two in the morning, witnessing the commercial model-turned-senatorial candidate's wife shake and shimmy under overhead lights. What would be a liquor-laced Saturday night to some is shifting into Sunday morning and several parties are reaching their climax on the other side of town, yet Audrey has chosen this "party"—a rally at a congested town square in Parañaque bordered by cramped alleys, decked with shanties, and reached only through pathways of rough-hewn ground.

> **Audrey's mission is clear: Get husband elected, support husband and save the country**

"*Sino po ang iboboto niyo?*" she asks, inspiriting the horde like a high school cheerleader. "*Si Mig Zubiri!*" they yell back, Audrey's efforts to enumerate what he's done in office and correct the scribbling of "Boom-ta-rat Zubiri" on ballots proving satisfactory. When she descends the stage, she reignites a direct ac-

CAMPAIGN/ C2

PRAYING FOR PEACEFUL ELECTIONS. Audrey Zubiri lighting candles at Our Lady of Manaoag

"I want to reward my good girl with a star!"
HANNAH MONTANA

MYGLOBE INFO • FUN • ATBP

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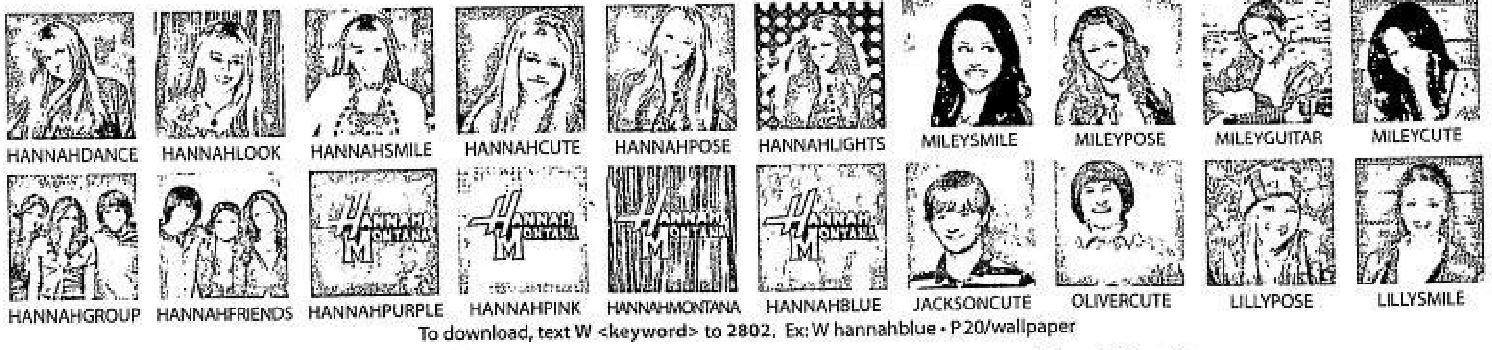
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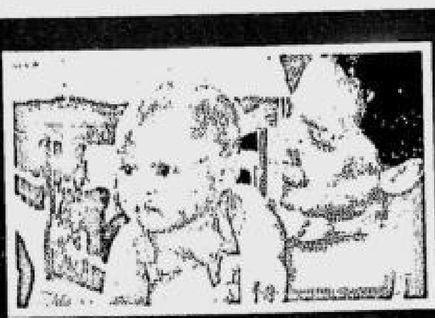
Hannah Montana CD's Out Now! ©Disney 2007 All Rights Reserved.

Catch Hannah Montana on Disney Channel.

girl, ang lakas mo sa Globe

IN A MUSLIM community with Mikee Defensor



MANDALUYONG, baby!

AUDREY Zubiri during her radio rounds.

Campaign wishes and electoral dreams

DRIVEN TO SERVE. Team Zubiri does a motorcade in Palawan.

From page C1

cord with the people—those with looks of puzzlement after expecting the congressman to appear, now with nods of acknowledgment towards his young wife—their hands pumping hers; Audrey requesting their electoral support; her gleaming chestnut eyes looking back at them reassuringly.

Representative Zubiri

"I was never a housewife," she says, taking a sip of the Gatorade that gets her through long nights like this one, campaigning without her husband in order to cover more voting ground. "I get grumpy if I'm not doing anything. I'd rather be busy and stressed than doing absolutely nothing." Of course, leisure and normalcy were never pillars that buttressed her relationship with who the public has tagged as "Mr. Biofuel" or associated with a jingle that's gotten more airplay than Fergie's latest track. More than their fawned-over engagement, the headliner of a wedding that's filled up lifestyle glossies or the all-too-suitable conjoining of two sterling inhabitants of Philippine high society, there was always a third party that hovered above the couple: "The people." "You have to know it's bigger than the two of you already—his role as public servant is much bigger than having a normal life together. He never separated it from his personal life—our love life," she explains. "I knew from the start that this was the life that I was getting myself into."

What was a 10-year plan Audrey had drawn up in her teens, at the outset of a modeling career that included lending her mug as the face of Ivory and Pink Soda, would soon include political campaigns and medical missions in distant provinces. What's more, it would have her tying the knot at 23, suspending her masters in Spain and leaving plans to ease herself into a job in front of or behind the cameras of a colossal network like CNN. Instead of broadcasting the news however, her relationship with Miguel would involve being part of it—meeting everyone from councilors to sultans and helping fund medical missions that could probably get the girl her own white frock from the Missionaries of Charity. "This kind of life has a way of making sure you're never confined to living within a certain bubble—that you're very much aware of what's happening all around you," says Audrey, who, despite having joined outreaches as a student in the past, has never experienced such lows as visiting depressed areas like Smokey Mountain—or such highs as seeing the youth in those areas take an active interest in who they'll elect come May 14.

TEAM UNITY. Mike Defensor, Joker Arroyo, Audrey Zubiri and Ralph Recto

GRITING DE AVANCE. Audrey Zubiri campaigning for husband Migz Zubiri in Mandaluyong.

Socio-political sweetheart

Yet this is a new crowd to woo; one that wasn't as privy to the two-dimensional looker that appeared on television—or on posh party pages. Rather than the well-heeled trickles cradling amarettos and vodka tonics, she'll be using the magnetism she once had pitching primetime to the youth as a Studio 23 VJ, to work a room truly affected by what her husband can or cannot do for the country. Then again, this'll be an opportunity to show that behind every great *amigo*, there's a sturdy *amiga* who does more than smile and wave by her husband's side. Along with solid waste management, better rent control for tenants, or a biofuel revolution among the numerous projects, bills, and laws spearheaded by her husband, the young Mrs. Zubiri's got plans that revolve around being more than a veritable wife to Bukidnon's wunderkind politico; more like a philanthropic crusader with a mission to expedite proper health care to barangays and grant the very same children that make up a third of her rallies the education they deserve. "Migs is not a political animal. The way he serves is with a lot of dedication and passion. When you meet someone like that, it rubs off on you and you want to feel the same way and get involved," she explains. "If I could smile in front of the camera all day, it's even easier for me to smile in front of people all day. I don't ever want to fall into the trap of seeing people as a source of votes. That's one thing Miguel taught me—that you should see people as the reason you're running and as the people you're there to help and serve."

GROUNDBREAKING of women center in Agusan del Sur

PARTYING WITH THE LOCALS. Audrey in Agusan del Sur

ZUBIRI FOR THE YOUTH. In Pangasinan reaching out to the next generation

Despite all her knowledge about rent control and farming subsidization, you can still see hints of the girl behind the workhorse—one who plays with her hair, sings mid-90s hits in the car, retouches her makeup and apologizes for her girlishness. There is also the resilient idealism and sincerity that accompanies her youth, elevating sacrifice and effacing flightiness; her marital devotion congruent with her devotion to the people her husband strives to serve. "I wouldn't say I don't have a social life anymore," she explains of the people she greets zigzagging through barangays—from infants to *tambays* swigging Red Horse at dawn. "It's just different from the old social life that I used to have. I've been enjoying it, honestly—meeting people from North to South, from all walks of life. But I'm still 24. At the end of the day, there's still so much I have to learn."

As she eagerly ascends yet another stage—her fifth rally of the night—Audrey's mission is clear: Get husband elected, support husband and save the country (more or less). "*Ako po si Audrey Zubiri*," she declares to the crowd. If we're to learn something from her 10-year plans, the next elections could see us writing that name on ballots as well.

The unlikely new tastemakers

SPIDEY sense and sensibility

THEY'VE BEEN hailed as the new superpower in the world of film.

Yet you won't find this emerging influential subculture clinking martini glasses at a cocktail party, as they're more likely clicking their mouse in front of a computer. Neither would you find them chatting their heads away at a nocturnal hotspot, for instead they're chatting via Instant Messenger or updating their blogs late into the night. High society? More like The Tolkien Society. So just who are they, and why are they powerful?

They are the fanboys. Or as Time magazine describes them, "the typically geeky 16 to 34 year old male (though there are some fangirls) whose slavish devotion to a pop culture subject, like a comic-book character or a video game, drives them to blog, podcast, chat, share YouTube videos, go to comic book conventions and see a movie on the subject of his obsession."

LIVE long and prosper.

IF YOU know what this is, you could be a closet geek.

GLOBAL warning

Could it be? Geeks as the new tastemakers? Allow me to explicate.

OUT THE WINDOW

Tals Diaz

Could it be? Geeks as the new power set? Hand me those pencils and 3-inch thick eyeglasses, and allow me to explicate, in geek-like style.

Geek history

The word "geek" actually traces its origins to sideshow circus performers—circus freaks who swallowed live animals or insects, or bit the heads off snakes, chickens and other such creatures. (In that sense, Ozzy Osbourne could be classified as a geek for his diet that included live bat heads.) Many lexicographers source "geek" from "geck," a word used by Shakespeare, which meant "fool" or an "object of scorn." In 1976, a song by Freddie Blassie portrayed geeks as social outcasts who deserved to be harassed.

Wild carnival acts, fools, and harassed social outsiders—not exactly the typical qualities of the powerful set. So what about them makes them, dare I say, special and admirable—and even influential, as Time proclaims? It's their personal passion that borders on obsession. It's the devotion of these alpha fans that the mainstream would call abnormal. What I actually think is v. cool about geekiness is that the reward is in the pursuit of this passion, and not fame or fortune. I'd even call it true rebellion and nonconformity (though not the glamorous kind), as it's a subculture that's not obsessed with the usual preoccupations of money, coolness or popularity.

My father, the Trekkie

I'd say my first real encounter with a geeky fanboy was my father. He was an unabashed Trekkie in the truest form. I was clued in early on—we had a Starship Enterprise telephone in the house, complete with Star Trek pencils and thick notepads that read, "Captain's Log." When "Star Trek" was still on local TV, I remember that hour as being sacred; for my father, it was like going to church. And when the movie versions of Star Trek came out, he'd drag us reluctant kids to the theaters in an attempt to share his lifelong obsession.

I guess that's how I inherited some geeky traits, but in a balanced degree. Those who know me well will attest to my closet geekiness that's beyond my partying and globe trekking persona. The clues are all over the place: My beloved books, my uncanny addiction to "Jeopardy," regular Star Wars references and Gaiman graphic novel collection. Oh and, er ... chess sessions on the beach with a good friend. (He has a waterproof chess set! I couldn't resist).

Local geekdom

GET A ROOM! This is a Geek tragedy.

The Philippines has its own legion of fanboys and fangirls, proud geeks all—The New Worlds Alliance. (Or as I'd tease them, the "New Nerds Alliance." Peace y'all!). They refer to each other as "Batallion Commander," "Headmistress" or "High King." (High *nako!*)

And if they're Trekkies, they greet each other with the Vulcan Salute, with a raised hand, palm forward and fingers parted between the middle and ring finger, saying "Live long and prosper." The proper response is "Peace and long life."

The New Worlds Alliance is also 10,000-strong, composed of the Philippine Tolkien Society, Star Wars Philippines, The Philippine Order of Narnians, Pinoy Harry Potter, Pinoy Slayer, and the Alliance for Eclectic Gamers and Interactive Storytellers, among others. Their vice chairperson, Paolo Jalbuena, is a true Trekkie and a cool guy in my book. I asked him about the whole Vulcan Salute, and he explains that they do it sometimes, "when we discover new Trekkies. But on regular days, most of us don't. It's not a requirement."

Paolo believes that being a geek is a positive thing. About being hailed as the new power set, he says, "it's about time that big movie production outfits listen to us. Critics don't know anything." That may be the case when, say, a movie like "300" or "Spiderman" hits the screen and mainstream critics who are non-Frank Miller or Spidey fans lambast it, then eat crow after it rakes in hundreds of millions of dollars in the opening weekend.

And this is why geeks are powerful. They are "zealously loyal, notoriously finicky, and often aggressive with those who dare to disagree with him," as Time describes. So when the object of their fascination is released in the Holly 'hood, you can bet the farm that they'll come out in full force, from whatever shadowy crevice they inhabit, and show their unwavering support. And it doesn't end there in this age of interconnectivity. Fanboys would blog, IM, post clips on YouTube, and send them out to the universe of grateful kindred geeks out there.

But just as obsessive fanboys can spell the phenomenal success of a show, they can just as well take part in its demise. I'd cite the case of "Lost" (truly a lost case), which has become a victim of online fan-ifestation. Overzealous fans all over the world wrote their theories of "Lost" online, and thereby gave the show's scriptwriters a real challenge to come up with the plot answers that weren't posted yet. Now, the show's storyline had just become too weird and convoluted that its ratings dipped sharply, and the show's end was recently declared to be at hand. Ex-Losties (like me) just became sick of waiting for answers to open-ended plotlines! Besides, I've found a new obsession on TV, and it's "Heroes."

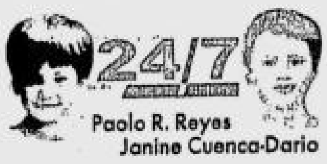
Geek Carnaval

This coming movie season, you can bet that it'll be like Geek Carnaval, with fanboy magnets like "Spiderman," "Transformers," "Harry Potter and the Order of the Phoenix," and "Fantastic Four: Rise of the Silver Surfer" hitting the big screen. I liken it to releasing Great White sharks into a sea of blood.

Truth to tell, I'm actually excited for "Transformers" the movie. I remember those "robots in disguise" all too well, because of my brother's obsession with them once upon a time, in a past lifetime, which drove him to collect the whole cast of Autobots and Decepticons. Back then, I thought it was the coolest thing I'd ever seen in my young life. What can I say? Passion is admirable ... and infectious.

Live long and prosper!

Beat of Brazil



Paolo R. Reyes
Janine Cuenca-Dario

IF YOU'VE BEEN DYING TO fly half way around the world to experience the electrifying salsa beats and booty-shaking rituals of a Brazilian Carnaval, pack your bags and head to M Café (Ayala Museum, Greenbelt 4, Ayala Center, Makati, phone: 757-3000) every Tuesday night of May.

Celebrate hot summer nights with the infectious Afro-Cuban breakbeat and electro-samba grooves of multi-talented performer Nyko Maca and her sonic accomplice, Playground (composed of electronic DJ Neon8, guitarist Rick Sanchez, and saxophonist Alvin Cornista). The group has gone traipsing across the globe in search of bossa, infusing Maca's classical jazz background with batucada and a few heady strokes of hip-hop-rooted neo-soul.

They headline this month's much-awaited HeadTurner series, which will also feature DJ Andy Ty on May 15, DJs Brando and Shannon on May 22, and DJ Red-I on May 29. (Nyko Maca+Playground will also premiere their eagerly-awaited music video, "Turn My Head," on the 22nd.) So shake that bunda and brace yourself for giddy dose of gypsy strings, afro-jazz brass, and cryptic musings as Maca and her crew bring on the Latin-infused funk. Call 0917-8591013 or visit www.myspace.com/nykomaca.

More Super! 24/7 events:

May 12, Saturday

Blow by Blow Saturday w/ DJs Bombi Balquiedra, Jon Naval, & Ali Nepomuceno at Warehouse 135; Imago, Daydream Cycle, Chillitees, Katipunan Suicides, El Mercurio, Libido, and Nevertheless at Saguijo; PI Jazz at Greenbelt 2 & 3; Siesta w/ Soundsgood DJs at Embassy Cuisine; Rouge: Lounge in Color at M Café ; Karen Manion & Blu Room at Martinis Bar; Sexy Saturdays at Absinth; DJs Jon Herrera & Tolo Bote at Temple; Sleepless w/ DJ Martin Pulgar at Embassy Club; Cynthia Alexander at Conspiracy; DJs Scratchmark & Bliss at Prince of Jaipur; Arriba at Café Havana Malate; Gogo Weekend at Bed; Car Club Events at Bonifacio High Street

May 13, Sunday

Mother's Day Brunch & Dinner Buffet at M Café; Saxophoro & street performers at Greenbelt 2 & 3; MPO Quartet & sidewalk artists at Serendra; World Press Photo 2007 exhibit at SM Mall of Asia; Autobahn Motorshow feat. Cycling Race at Bonifacio High Street; Nuevo Ritmo at Café Havana Greenbelt; Brunch Affair w/ Concertino at Azzurro Linden Suites

May 14, Monday

Julianne at Conspiracy; Happy Mondays w/ Borgy Manotoc at Embassy Cuisine; Arriba at Café Havana Greenbelt; I Don't Like Mondays! w/ DJ RO at Gweilos Makati; Chemical Underground at Absinth

May 15, Tuesday

Electronica w/ Drip & guest DJs at Fiamma; Agaw Agimat, Triggerbliss, Kate Torralba, Daydream Cycle, Playphonics, Sundown Muse at Saguijo; Cuisine Royale w/ DJ Manolet Dario at Embassy Cuisine; 80s & 90s Night w/ DJ Jeff at Temple; Nyko Maca + Playground & DJ Andy T. at M Cafe

May 16, Wednesday

Nyco Maca + Playground at Sagujo; MYMP & Breaking Silence at Club O (formerly Dish); W Wednesdays w/ DJs Karl Ty & Cao Ocampo at Embassy Cuisine; DJs Mars Miranda & Johnyverse at Embassy Club; Mishmash w/ DJ Brando Umali at Absinth; Dejavu 90s Night w/ DJ David Ardiente at Coquina;

Nyko Macá · PLAYGROUND
Head Turner
M-AUDIO
MUSIC BURN
M

May 17, Thursday

Chicosci, Faspitch, Boy Elroy, Day One Movement, April Morning Skies, Angulo, and Kneel On Nails at Saguijo; Soundsgood DJs at Nuvo; SPIT at Mag:net Café; Reggae Mistress at Café Havana Greenbelt; Backtrack Thursday w/ Millenium at Club O; Radio Coquina at Coquina; World's Fastest Open Bar at Bed

May 18, Friday

Chill by the Bay feat. live bands & performers at SM Mall of Asia; Mon David at Conspiracy; Christian Bautista at Music Museum; Hottest: RnB & House at M1NT, The Fort; Absolut House w/ DJ Tony Pavia at Mezze; PI Jazz at Greenbelt 2 & 3; MPO Quartet at Serendra; Sala Ibiza w/ DJ Karl Ty at Nuvo; Electro Disko at M Café ; Decadance w/ DJ Boyet Almazan at Jill's; House Sessions at Fiamma; House@Home w/ DJ David Ardiente at Coquina; Karen Manion & Blu Room at Martinis Bar; MILF: Mom I Love Fridays! at Absinth; Soul Shine w/ DJ Marie Garcia at Embassy Cuisine; Jive Fridays at Temple; Arriba at Café Havana Greenbelt; The Jerks at 70s Bistro; DJs Scratchmark & Bcal at Prince of Jaipur; Nuevo Ritmo at Café Havana Malate; Drag-on! Fridays at Bed.

Schedules may change without prior notice. For more information and a complete listing of events, text 24/7 GIGS and send to 2851 (Globe) and 2951 (Smart). Submit your schedules before Tuesday to events@mag24-7.com, mag24_7@yahoo.com, and NocturnalNavigator@gmail.com.

BATH TIME is FUN TIME

If you are new to the baby-bathing scene, EQ Dry makes it easy for mommies to face this challenge and make it a happy routine for both baby and mommy.

First, line your baby wash, bath sponge, cloth towel, rubber toys beside your bath tub for easy access. Next, check if the water temperature is just right before letting baby in to the tub. For babies up to six months old, fill the bath tub with only up to five inches of water with his shoulders covered with warm water. For older babies, fill the bath no more than waist-high as a safety precaution. Finally, place your bath mat and slippers near the tub so babies don't slip when they get out of the water!

After undressing your baby, carefully place baby in the bath tub using one hand to support his neck and head. Use only a little amount of soap and wash him with the sponge from top to bottom and front to back. Use a wet, soapy cloth to clean his scalp and moistened cotton wool for his eyes and face. After soaping, rinse your baby thoroughly and wrap him in a towel or bath robe and pat him dry.

Bath time for babies is all about fun and play. Make this a part of baby's routine so that when he grows up, he'll appreciate the comforts of healthy hygiene. And with EQ Dry diaper, babies will surely look forward to bath time with their EQ Dry Bath Time Buddies!

Happy si baby, happy si mommy!

EQ Dry
BATH TIME Buddies
EQ Dry

Make bathing fun for your baby, get these bath time buddies for FREE with every purchase of EQ Dry!

FREE DELIVERY

PROMO MECHANICS:

1. You can join by simply collecting wrappers with intact points of ***EQ Dry Baby Diaper with colored cloth-like cover***. Points per packaging are as follows:

EQ DRY BABY DIAPER	LABEL POINTS
Mini Pack (S4, M4, L4, XL4)	1/4 pt
Travel Pack (NB22, S20, M18, L16, XL14)	1 pt
Econo Pack (S40, M36, L32, XL28)	2 pts
Jumbo Pack (S60, M54, L48, XL42)	3 pts
Mega Pack (M84, L72)	4 pts

2. You must collect the corresponding points to be able to get one (1) collectible item:

ITEM		POINTS
Bathroom Mat	Pig / Frog / Duck / Tiger	15 pts
Bath Robe	Pig / Frog / Duck / Tiger	12 pts
Bathroom Slippers	Pig / Frog / Duck / Tiger	8 pts
Bath Sponge	Pig / Frog / Duck / Tiger	6 pts

* Only entire wrappers with intact points of ***EQ Dry Baby Diaper with colored cloth-like cover*** will be accepted.
* Entries containing cut-out points will NOT be honored.
* Entries containing soiled wrappers (wrappers contaminated with feces or mud, discolored or faded wrappers) or unused wrappers will NOT be honored.

3. Submit the required ***EQ Dry Baby Diaper with colored cloth-like cover*** wrappers together with the complete information written on a piece of paper: sender's name, complete address, telephone and/or mobile phone numbers, baby's name and age, signature of parent/guardian plus the desired premium item/s enclosed in an envelope. *Please include landmarks for hard to find locations.*

4. Entries can be mailed or hand carried to:

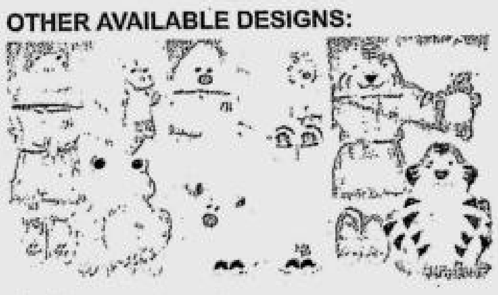
"EQ DRY Bath Time Buddies"
JS Unitrade Merchandise, Inc.
31st Floor Raffles Corporate Center,
Emerald Avenue, Ortigas Center,
Pasig City 1605

Or

"EQ DRY Bath Time Buddies"
P.O. Box 14280 Pasig City

5. The chosen premium item/s will be delivered FREE of charge by JRS Express to the address submitted by the sender. In the event that the sender is not present during the time of delivery, a member of the sender's household may be asked to sign a proof of delivery and receive the premium item/s in behalf of the sender.

OTHER AVAILABLE DESIGNS:



6. Entries thru mail must be received on or before July 31, 2007 to qualify. Hand delivered entries must be received on or before July 15, 2007 to qualify.

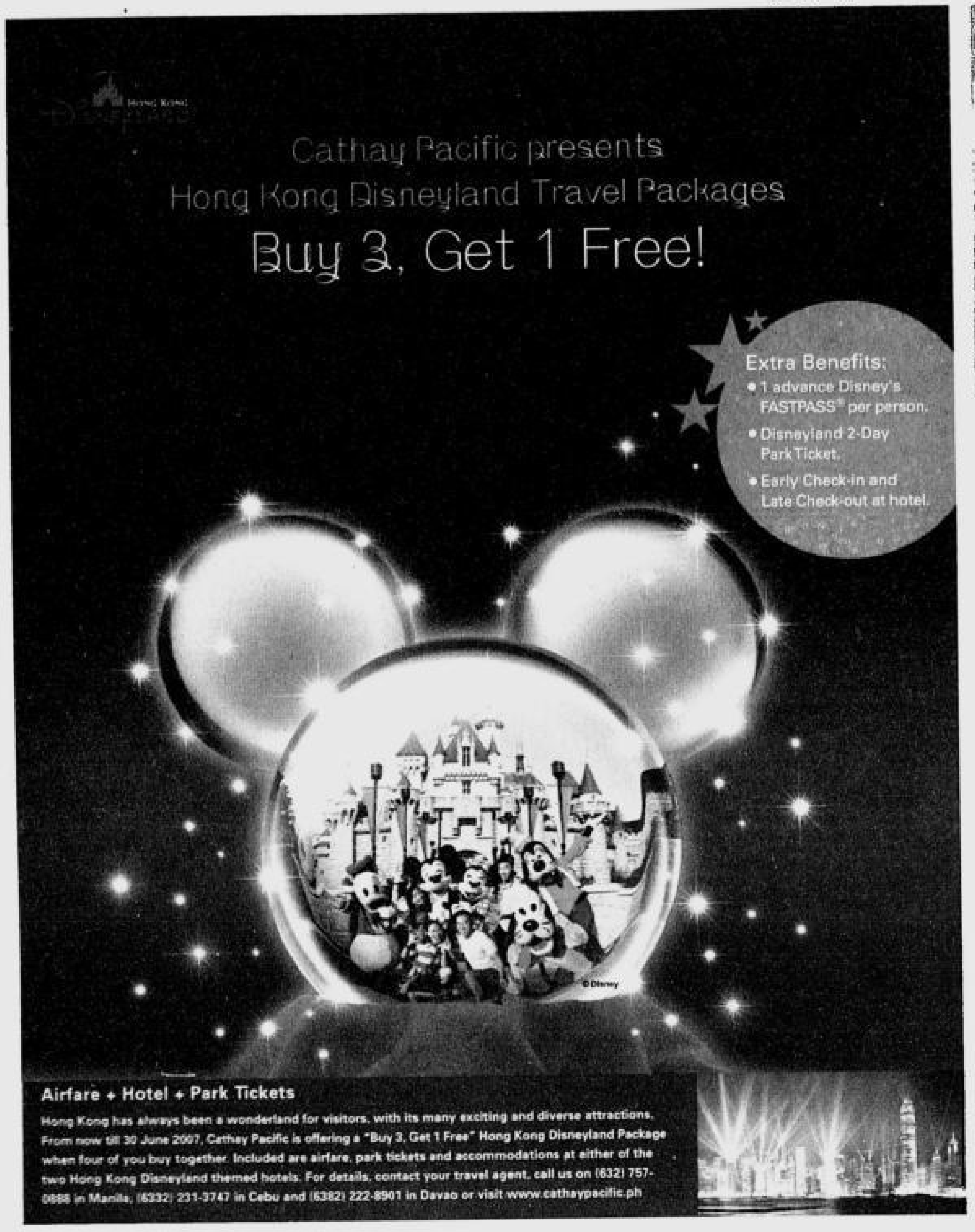
7. Premium items will be delivered until September 30, 2007.

8. You may join the promo as many times as you want.

9. Prizes are not convertible to cash.

PROMO PERIOD:
April 16 to July 15, 2007

Per DTI-NCR Permit No. 1246, series of 2007.



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BALLOT, PINOY! Artworks by Nico Puertollano and Katwo Librando

Funked up elections

THIS CAMPAIGN SEASON, design collective 27+20's Nico Puertollano and Katwo Librando dare to address the Philippine election issues by morphing their thoughts into artwork in a two-part exhibition, Vote For Sale.

Using skateboards as his canvas, Nico inscribes ideals such as "Kalayaan," (freedom) "Katarungan," (justice) and "Demokrasya" (democracy) in alibata style. As an alphabet most Filipinos have long forgotten, he hints about how these terms are never really meant, more so understood. Self-expression aside (because he is, as a matter of fact, a real skater boy), the boards basically serve as a challenge to ride our so-called political values onto the asphalt.

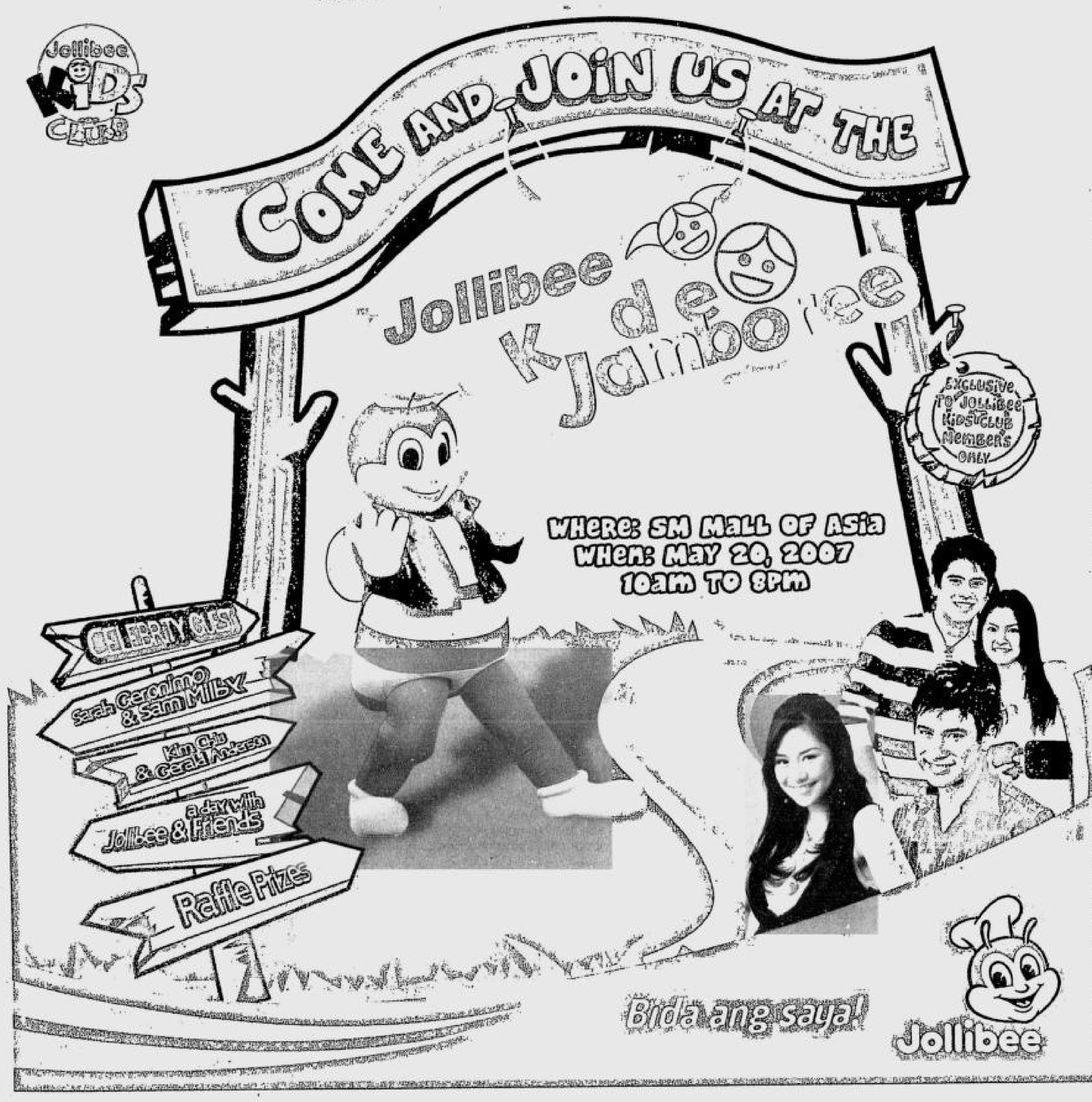
Part deux of the show presents campaign posters of Hollywood celebs Mary Kate and Ashley Olsen, Madonna, and even Lindsay Lohan, in a hodgepodge of graphics boldly fused with a play on slogans like "Boom Payat Payat," "Move Over, Dancing Queen" and "Viva El Firecr**ch." This half is actually very tongue-in-cheek, as Katwo boldly fuses the pretty with the propaganda.

Vote For Sale exposes a lighter, comical yet socially relevant side of how Pinoy elections are done. Katwo's toonified graphics make you wish there were more than twelve slots needed in the Senate (because the ogling is addicting). Nico's work, on the other hand, is cleverly deep and of high impact, impelling the spectator to ponder on our political status quo.

VOTE FOR SALE

VOTE WISELY. The exhibit runs until tomorrow at Theo Gallery, Saguijo Cafe

Vote For Sale runs until May 13, 2007, at the Theo Gallery, Saguijo Café, Makati City. For more info, check http://www.2720.tv, email info@2720.tv or call +63915-5722695.



JOIN JOLLIBEE KIDS CLUB AND WIN EXCITING PRIZES AT THE JAMBOREE :

- Promo period is from May 7 to 20, 2007.
- How to join the raffle:
  a. Join Jollibee Kids Club and for a MINIMUM PURCHASE AMOUNT OF 150 PESOS IN A SINGLE RECEIPT from any Metro Manila JOLLIBEE BRANCH, and instantly GET 1 MEMBER'S ENTRANCE TICKET AND 1 COMPANION'S ENTRANCE TICKET to the Jamboree on May 20, 2007 at the SM Mall of Asia Music Hall.
  b. On the BIG JAMBOREE DAY, on May 20, 2007 at SM Mall of Asia Music Hall, PRESENT YOUR ENTRANCE TICKETS at the Registration area to get your RAFFLE STUBS (2 FOR EACH TICKET).
  c. FILL UP THE RAFFLE STUBS. Write your complete name, address, telephone number, and signature at the raffle stubs.
- Drop your raffle stub in the drop boxes located at the registration area at the SM Mall of Asia Music Hall on May 20, 2007
- All entries must be received not later than 6:00 pm of May 20, 2007. Jollibee Foods Corporation and its agencies will have no responsibility for lost, illegible, incomplete, misdirected, mutilated, postage due, or late entries.
- The draw will be held on May 20, 2007 at the SM Mall of Asia Music Hall in the presence of a DTI representative from 6:30 pm onwards. The following prizes will be drawn:

	Qty	Description
a.	3	Gift Checks for a shopping spree at Toy Kingdom worth of 5,000.00 pesos
b.	2	Nokia 7360 cellphones
c.	2	Ipod Shuffles
d.	1	Kitchen Showcase (consist of)
	1	Refrigerator with top freezer
	1	Microwave oven
	1 set	Aluminum Cooking set and utensils
	1	Blender
e.	1	Computer Showcase (consist of)
	1	Computer Monitor
	1	CPU
	1	CD writer
	1	Printer
	1	Computer table
f.	1	Entertainment Showcase (consist of)
	1	21" Flat Screen TV
	1	Stereo Component with DVD player and 6 speakers
	1	Wow Magic Sing (Fiesta '06 edition)

- Winners will be notified via telegram or registered mail as to when and where they can claim their prizes
- Prizes will only be awarded to the person whose name appears on the winning entry. Prizes not claimed within 60 days from notification of winners will be forfeited in favor of Jollibee Foods Corporation with prior approval from DTI
- Redemption Center: Saga Events
  3F Anglo Bldg. 715-A
  Shaw Blvd Wack-Wack
  Mandaluyong City
  Philippines
- In claiming of prizes, the winner must present the claim stub, original notification telegram or registered mail from Jollibee Foods Corporation and/or Saga Events, and must present two (2) original valid identification documents (Driver's License, Passport, Birth Certificate, TIN ID, Company ID, student ID, and SSS ID)
- In case the winner is unable to present two (2) original and valid ID's or documents stated above, he must submit sworn affidavits, executed by two (2) disinterested persons attesting to his identity, and a certification from the responsible municipality/city official certifying that he is a resident of the said municipality/city
- In cases wherein the winner cannot personally claim his prize for any reason, he can send a proxy on his behalf. The proxy should be able to present the following:
  - A letter of authorization duly signed by the winner, nominating the proxy as the acknowledged recipient of the prize on the winner's behalf
  - Two (2) original and valid ID's (Driver's License, passport, TIN ID, company ID, student ID, and SSS ID) of the winner
  - Two (2) original and valid ID's (Driver's license, passport, TIN ID, company ID, student ID, and SSS ID) of the proxy
  - Original copy of the notification telegram or registered mail from Jollibee Foods Corporation and/or Saga Events.
  - An entrant can only win once. If a name is drawn more than once, the winner will receive the prize of a higher value and a winner for the other prize will be redrawn.
- Prizes are not transferable or convertible to cash
- All decision of Jollibee Foods Corporation and its agents are final and no objections will be entertained.
- Employees of Jollibee Foods Corporation, their affiliates, distributors, advertising, and promotional agencies, as well as their relatives up to the 2nd degree of consanguinity or affinity, and DTI are not eligible to participate in this promotion
- These terms and conditions settle the rules for participating in the contestant and are officially contractually binding

Per DTI NCR Permit No. 2010 Series of 2007

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Super

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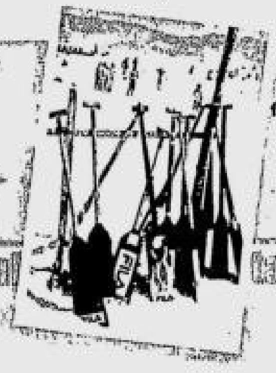
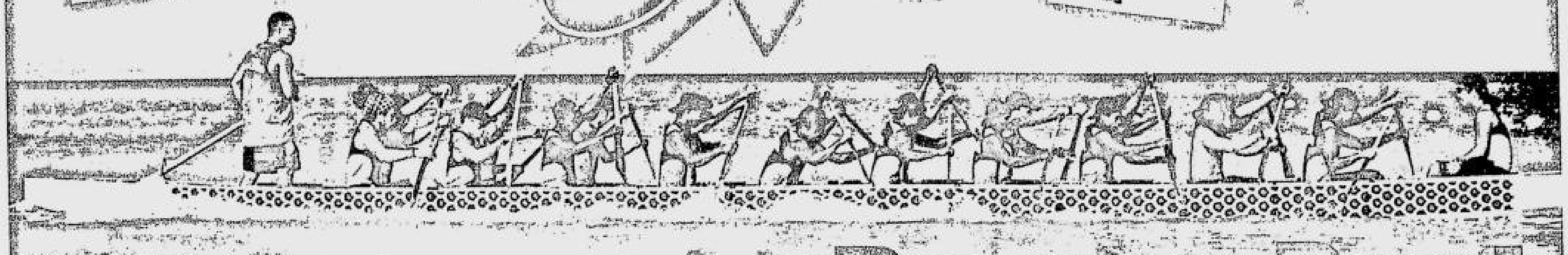




Enter the Year of the Dragon Boat

Tim Yap

THEY ARE FIERY. THEY ARE impassioned and driven. They are the Spartans of the sea. A Boracay trip is never complete until you spot the rock hard abs and toned muscles, of both men and women, just walking along the white sand strip before sunset. They are the dragon boat racers.

Last week, adventurous sportswear lifestyle brand Fila topbilled the First Boracay International Dragon Boat Festival which gathered 41 teams from China, Hong Kong, Singapore, Italy and our very own wow Philippines—all 850 of the best beefy boaters from all over the world, on OUR shores.

Let's boat in! For the day's warm up, there were skimboard design contests and paraw sailing among the participants. For the actual boating, the Fila-clad competitors all plunged into their boating precincts—the tranquil waters of Boracay, still clean and pristine despite naysayers who say otherwise.

I am witness to the clean-up efforts of the islanders and the island lovers whenever I come home in the morning right before breakfast. There are more trashed people than there are trash on our beloved island.

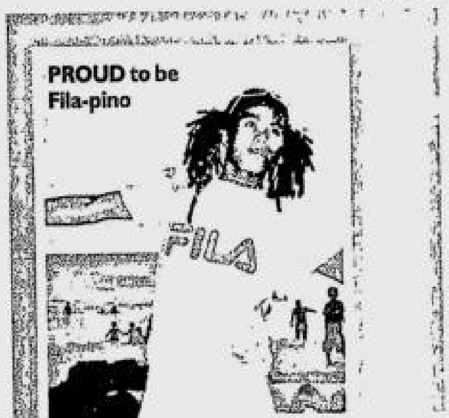
Now back to the boaters. It was a sea of palpable energy, all eight boats composed of 22 adrenaline-filled athletic bodies injecting a different kind of high onto the Bora waters.

Seeing all the men and women in synchronized action was mesmerizing. The Fila-sponsored team, called the Fila Bugsay Boracay Dragon Boat Paddlers started out as a team named Boracay Blades for women. Cris Albert, the prime force behind Fila made sure all the athletes wore the right battle gear, ready for the race, and beyond. As the Spartans would scream out loud, "A-hoo! A-hoo! A-hoo! A-hoo!"

Race to reality

I am constantly inspired by Candy Perez de Tagle of Nami, who got into the sport and has been boating ever since. Island Chicken Inasal's **Bridgette Bustamante** is also an avid dragon racer and it shows in her tanned and toned body—makes dining at her resto an even more pleasurable experience. The two ladies, along with **Gigi Piit, Nenette Graf** and

ENTER/ D2



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THE GOOD SHEPHERD. Fila model Daniel Shepherd

JUST BEAT IT. Fila model Sebastian Stoeber

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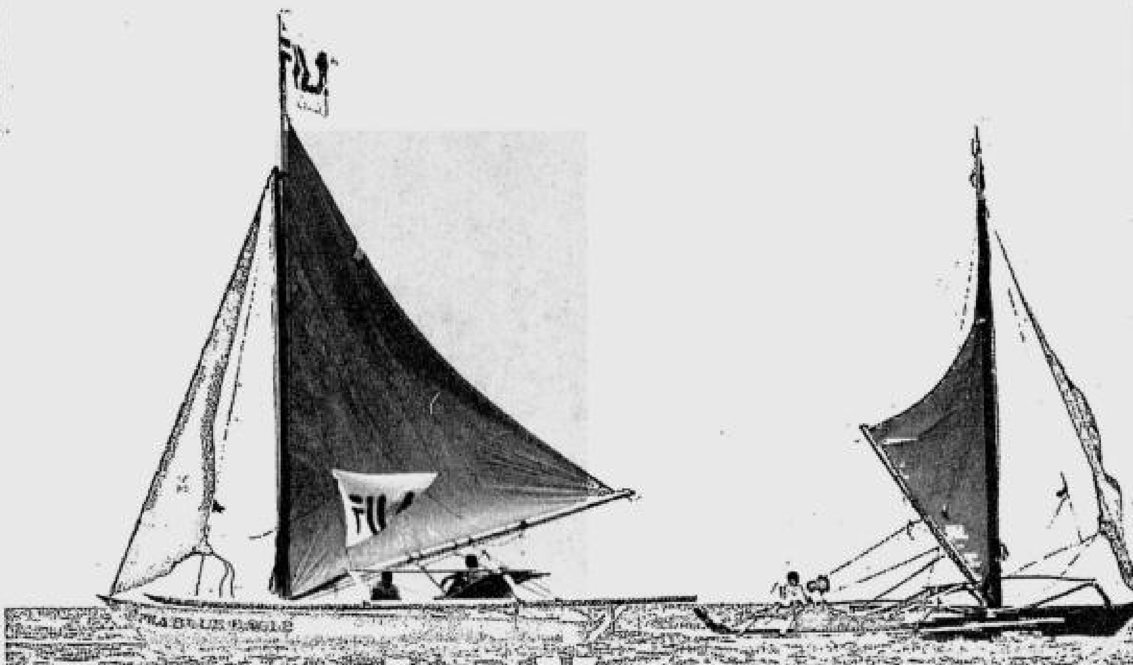
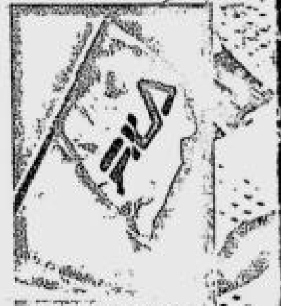
MILKING EVERY MOMENT OF LIFE. Isabella Albert is the latest blessing to the Albert family.





SAIL AWAY. Fila [illegible]

Enter the Year of the Dragon Boat

GOLD'S GYM. He found gold in the Philippines.

From page D1

Tootsie Ronnholm, along with Fila, joined forces to make this dragon boat race a reality. I went to their victory party and awards ceremony at the Boracay Regency Hotel beachfront, and the camaraderie between these women was a chocful of good vibes.

The men on the other hand, rushed into the party scene frenetically. No need for prodding, they were all pumped up for the par-tay! By the party site was a Fila lounge where models were sporting the latest summer and Fiore collections. The Fila Bugsay Boracay team won two golds and a silver for their teamwork—hurray!

On the topic of motherhood, Fila friend-**Donita Rose** popped by to say hello to **Cris**, and both mothers exchanged stories about their babies. As you may have already known, in true **Angelina Jolie** fashion, Cris has just mothered baby **Isabella Albert** (she is the Super! baby on this page—too too cute!) and is now preparing once again for Harvard. Talk about all the C's—charity, continuing education, Christianity and Cris Albert!

Elsewhere on the island were boat loads of parties. I would make a daily pit stop at Cafe Mediterranean, formerly known as Cafe Ischia, owned by **Ariel** and **Mimi Abriam**. Now managed by spin doctor **Mark Santiago**, the air-conditioned restobar is the perfect respite from the sweaty bodies of the sweltering outdoors.

Island folk say that these past few weeks were even more hectic than Holy Week itself. But it didn't feel like Greenbelt in the sand.. The vibe was chillaxed, the bodies were on full parade and the weather... perfect!

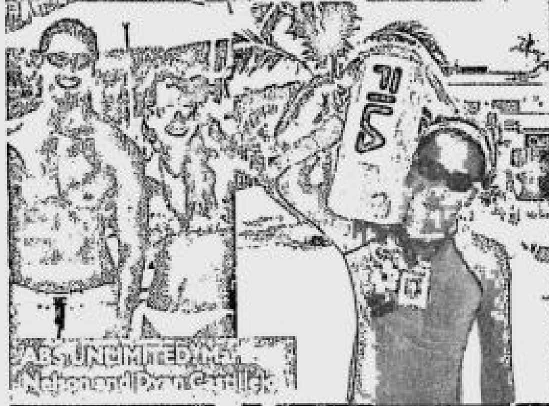
The week after, energy drink I-On had a whole day shebang at the Willy's beachfront. Now on the island is the *habagat* season, so the party action once again shifts back to the city. I-On transfers its energies to Embassy Super Club next Friday, May 18 for an all-nighter (what else would you expect?) party. Then again, the action never really stops. No such thing as off-peak season. It's always THE season.

Looking back at this past summer season, water sports and water spurts were never this much fun, baby!

ISLAND FEVER. [illegible]

FIRE IN WATER. [illegible]

PADDLING UP. The team with the highest spirit wins.



ABS UNLIMITED. [illegible] Nelson and Dan Castillo

MOTHER TO MOTHER. Donita Rose pays Cris Albert a friendly Fila visit.

SEXY BACK-TO-BACK. [illegible]

ISLAND HOP. [illegible]

AT CAFE MED. Frida Dario and Bora's best abs Ken

DOUBLE R. Fashion designer Raoul Ramirez

NAMI ISLAND. Candy Perez de Tagle and Bridgette Bustamante

BORA BLADES. Gigi Piit, Nenette Graf and Tootsie Ronnholm organized this event.

TEAM NAMI. Antonello la Bella, Romano Roma, Candy Perez de Tagle and Massimiliano Sodano

THREE TIMES THE FUN. Meng Bantegui, Rehina Bautista and Michelle Keng

Wyeth

Is your child Gifted?

There's a gift in every child. That's why it is crucial for you to discover the gift at an early age, and nurture it.

During the pre-school years, a child's abilities begin to surface. At this point, it becomes easier for a parent to observe and ensure his development, as well as spot his unique gift. To tell if your child is gifted, you must be able to observe his behavior, and compare these to those of other children his age.

Experts say there is a difference between the two groups of children: the intelligent and the gifted. Here is a list of characteristics that may help you find the category in which your child belongs.[1]

[illegible]	The Gifted Child
Knows the answers	Asks the questions
Is interested	Is highly curious
Is attentive	Is mentally and physically involved
Works hard	Playful, yet tests well
Answers the questions	Discusses in detail, elaborates
Is in the top group	Is a level higher
Listens with interest	Shows strong feelings and opinions
Learns with ease	Already knows
Needs 6-8 repetitions for mastery	Needs 1-2 repetitions
Understands ideas	Constructs abstractions
Enjoys peers	Prefers adults
Grasps the meaning	Draws inferences
Completes assignments	Initiates projects
Copies accurately	Creates a new design
Is receptive	Is intense

Parents should not expect a gifted child to be outstanding in all these characteristics. However, if your child exhibits a majority of the characteristics, help nurture his gift by understanding his needs and providing a good learning environment, proper care and the right nutrition.

Proper Care and Nutrition

Providing proper care means responding to a potentially gifted child's needs accordingly. You can provide the proper tools and means for creative expression. You can also help stimulate his creativity by introducing interesting activities and taking him to new places. When you have every reason to believe that your child is talented, you may opt to have him evaluated by a professional psychologist to determine if he is indeed gifted. This way, you're better able to provide for his distinct needs.[2]

To help nurture his potential and ensure his optimal development, also give him the proper nourishment early on. This will help support his increased physical and mental needs. A milk formula recommended for children 3 years and up is Promil Pre-School. It has ProGifted Formula 4, a proper blend of nutrients suitable for young children who are at an ideal stage for developing the gift. Promil Pre-School helps in the mental and psychomotor development, improving your child's motor skills, vision and visual memory.[3,4,5]

Together, let us nurture the gift

The proper nutrition your child gets from Promil Pre-School, combined with your guidance and proper care, will not only help ensure his optimal development, but also help nurture the gift.

So whether his interests include playing with Daddy's old guitar or scribbling on your walls, see it as a gift waiting to blossom. Along with the environment you provide, Promil Pre-School can help you nourish the gift in your child.

Promil Pre-School

Sources:
1. Szabos J. *Challenge Magazine.* 1989.
2. *Meeting the Needs of Gifted Children.* My Cinnamon Toast Parenting. http://www.mycinnamontoast.com/gifted.html.
3. Sandstead HH, Lolgren PA. Symposium: Dietary zinc and iron – recent perspectives regarding growth and cognitive development. *Journal of Nutrition* 2000; 130 3455-3465.
4. Walter T, De Andraca I, Chadud P, et al. Iron deficiency anemia: Adverse effects on infant psychomotor development. *Pediatrics* 1989; 84:7-17.
5. WebHealthCentre.com-Diet & Nutrition. *Food at work: Energy Givers.*

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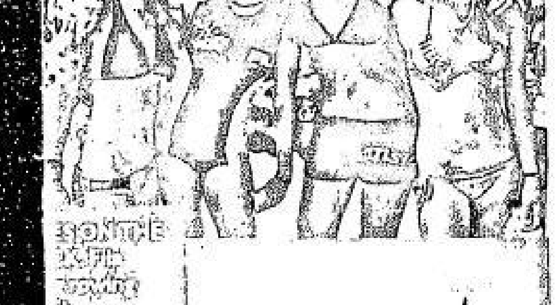
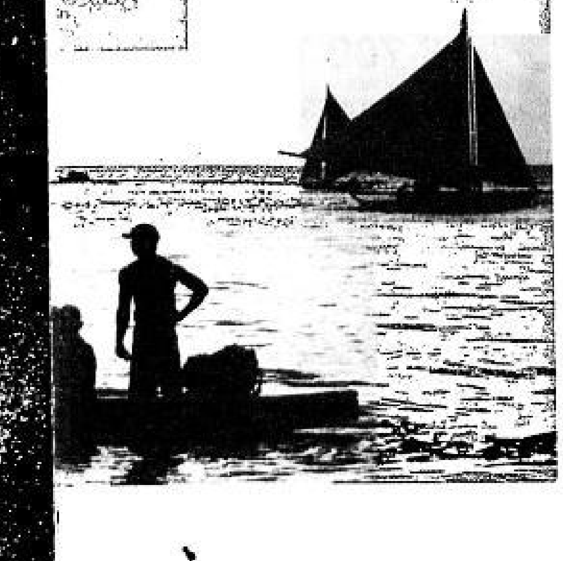




Super!Selections

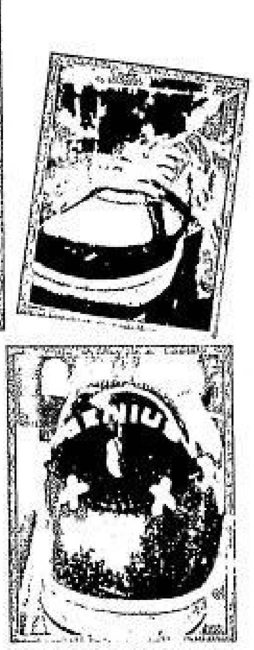
Streetwear and sneakerheads

STREETWEAR WILL HIT the shores of the Philippines on May 16, thanks to the efforts of Jerry Meng and the Greyone team. The anticipated Greyone Social shop offers great brands in street apparel and sportswear including Crooks and Castles, Mighty Healthy, 3Sixteen, Diamond Supply Co., Alife, Mishka, Creative Recreation, SSUR, In4mation and many more. Meng together with Manila-based hiptrepreneurs Jon and Rosario Herrera have crafted this concept shop catering to the forward thinking streetwear market. The Herreras, a brother-and-sister hiptrepreneur team who have established a presence in the club scene and marketing world in the Philippines, worked with Greyone's Arnold Espiritu on the classic design of the Greyone Social store in the lifestyle area of Rockwell Power Plant Mall.

Following the merger of Greyone with Soul Assassins, a loose collective of musicians and graphic designers including Estevan Oriol, Mister Cartoon, and Cypress Hill, the alliance spearheaded by DJ Muggs, Meng and Espiritu is poised to revolutionize street culture not only in America, but globally. The Greyone army is about to dominate the game.

Greyone, a premiere streetwear lifestyle boutique in Los Angeles, is known for having a unique and hot collection of sneakers.

With Greyone set to open in Manila, local sneakerheads lining up for a cool pair of new kicks might just be part of everyone's near future.



GREYONE SOCIAL is now open at the Lifestyle area of Powerplant Mall.

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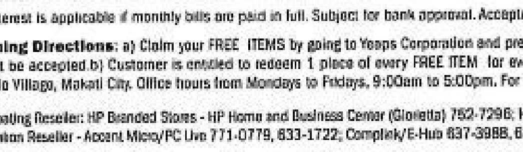

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The HP Contact Center is available Mondays thru Fridays 8:30 a.m to 5:30 p.m.

Per DTI-NCR Permit No.1902. Series of 2007.

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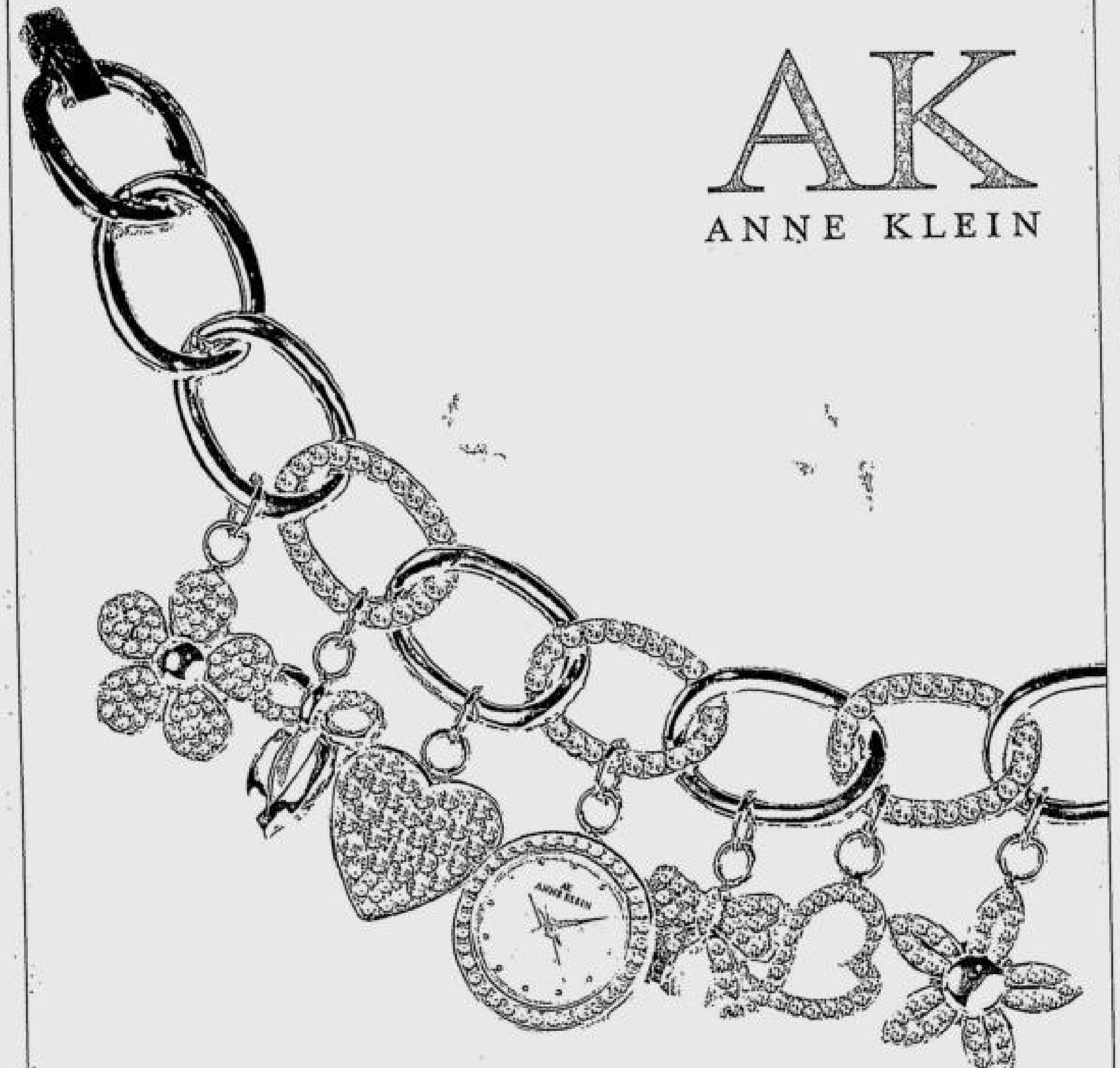

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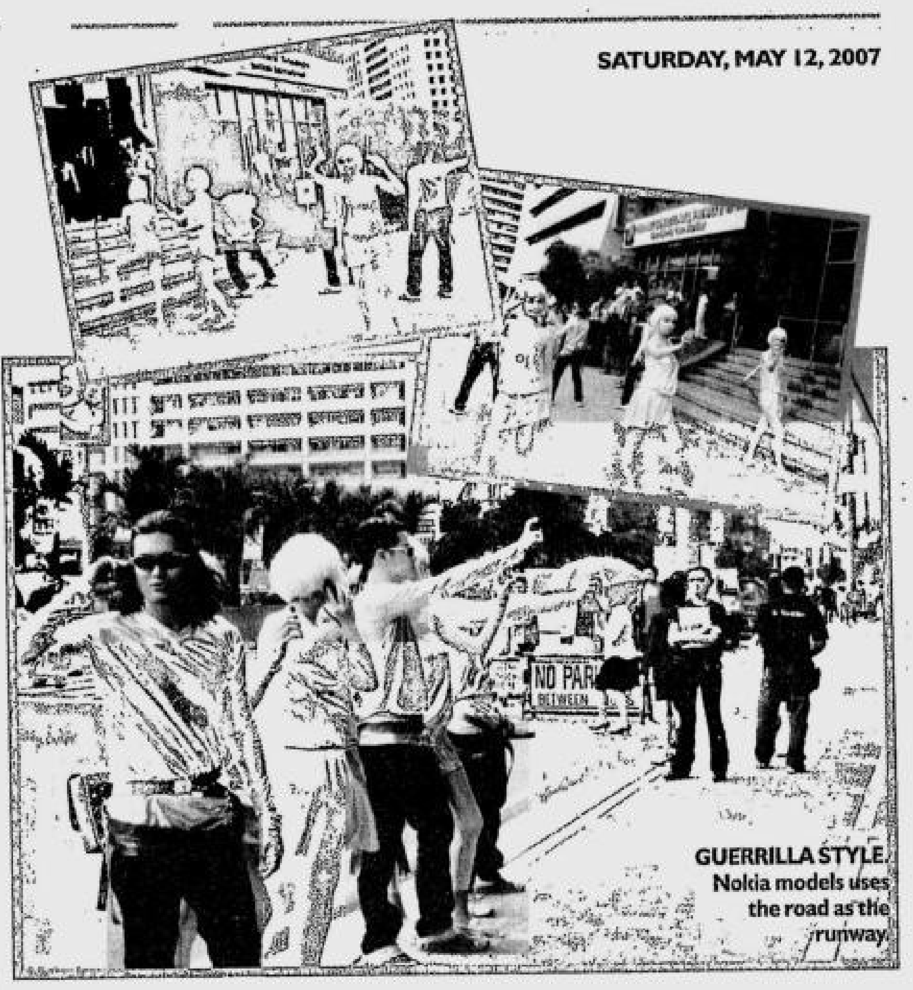


GUERRILLA STYLE. Nokia models uses the road as the runway.

Nokia 6300 takes the streets

STYLISH. SLIM. STRIKING.

Sexy and stunning models recently highlighted the fashionable qualities of the Nokia 6300 in the streets, bars, and malls of Alabang, Makati, Ortigas, and Quezon City. They paraded, sashayed, and posed in various locations throughout the metro, all of them dressed in chic silver garbs and armed with the stylish Nokia 6300.

They first invaded the streets of Ayala Avenue and Ortigas, the stores of Glorietta, Greenbelt, Podium, Shangri-La and Mall of Asia followed by the bars, restaurants and coffee shops of the hottest nightspots in Alabang, Greenhills, Makati, Fort, and Quezon City.

By showcasing the striking features in a unique fashion show, the Nokia 6300 has proven to be the perfect mobile phone cum fashion accessory that you can take to the streets.

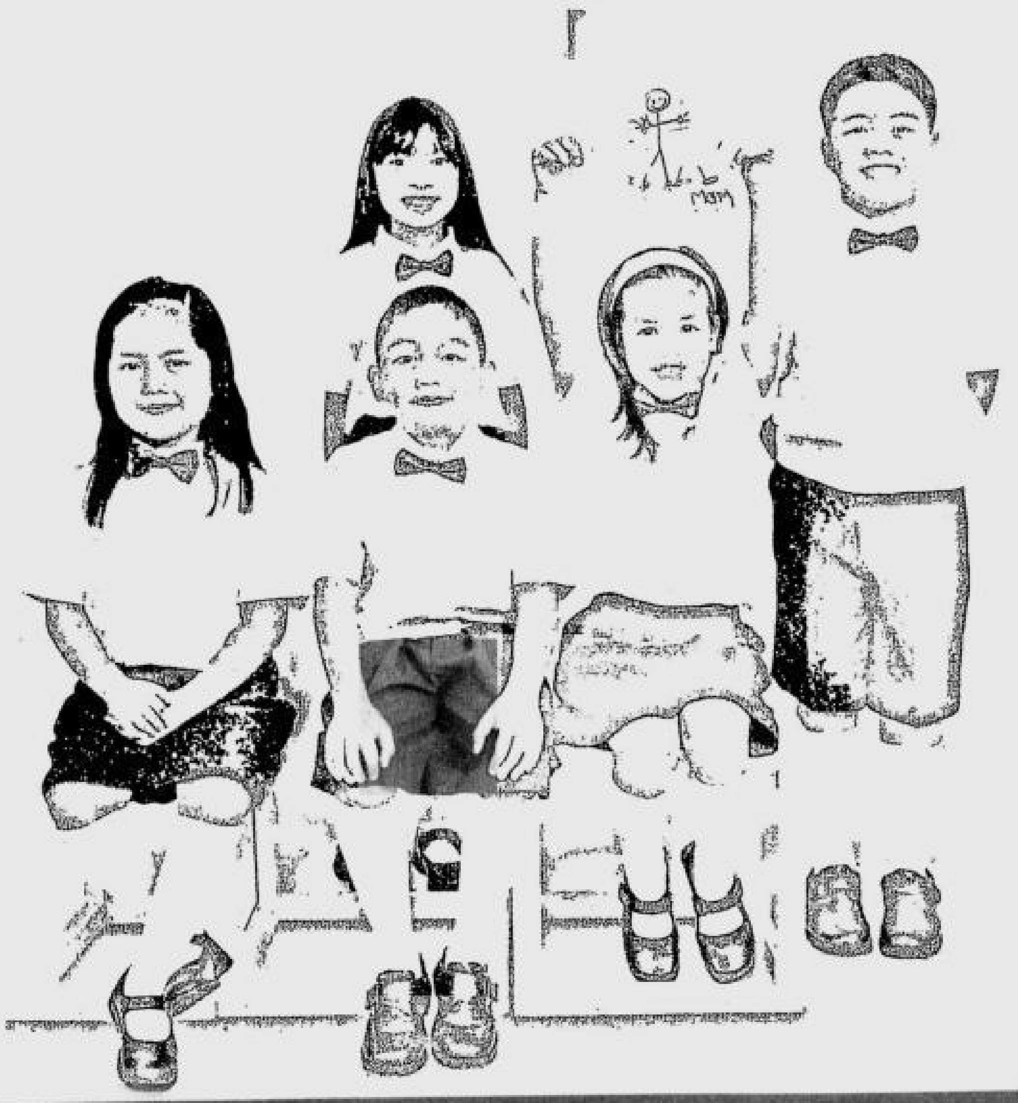
The Nokia 6300 has indeed made its statement—one can exude sophistication even with simplicity because true style never shouts.

Show off your style and win a Nokia 6300

We've been chronicling style for years now. This time, we want to know about your own Super style. Tell us about yourself and send us photos of your personal style—be as creative as you want. Send your photos to nokiasuperstyle@yahoo.com in JPG format along with your name, age, contact info. Don't forget the captions!

Nokia and Super will be giving away two sexy Nokia 6300 phones to two lucky and Super stylish Super readers.

Winning entries will be published in Super!



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FRUMPYBACK. The sad sack mom pants make even Mischa Barton look dumb and deformed.

These high-waisted horrors make a woman's backside flatter than a flapjack. For something that was never in fashion, why the [illegible] matronly denims [illegible] bac[illegible]

Revenge of the mom jeans

Age against the machine

Gino de la Paz

SHE'S bringing frumpy back. Sorta.

For someone who played someone who got dumped at prom in Chanel, lurked at the Cohen residence in Tsubi jeans, and made once-obscure design duo Proenza Schouler achingly important, Mischa Barton is the last person you'd expect to dive asshead-first into the high-waisted trend. But—groan—there she goes.

All it took was one—okay, maybe more than one—paparazzi shot of Marissa Cooper in skinny, hiked-to-the-armpits Hulsey Strutters by Sass & Bide (and a pair of 18th Amendment Bacall jeans) to confirm what the nutjob fashion world has been panting over for months and months now. That intoxicating aroma wafting through the air is the smell of the '90s returning in all its high-waisted glory. Yes, these are nail-biting times for denim wearers everywhere.

REVENGE/ E2

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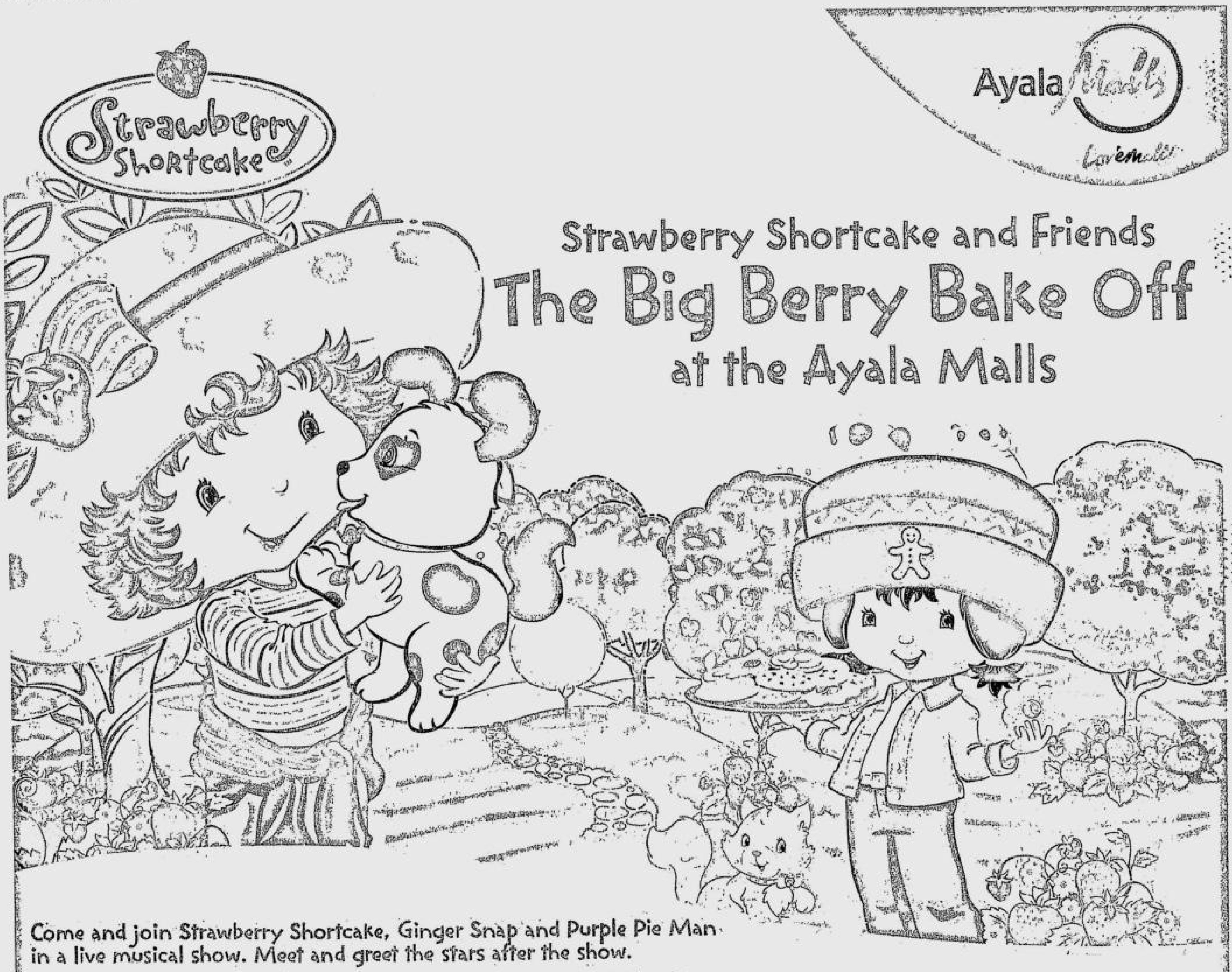

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SIB SIBULO
Age: 24 … Right …
Current occupation: TV host
Celebrity you'd like to interview: I'd say Amanda Griffin but I'd probably just stare and it'd be kinda weird.
Convince us in two sentences why you are the next MTV VJ? I love you. Will you marry me?

KAT ALANO
Age: 21
Current occupation: actress/host/model
What makes you the next MTV VJ? I love Vj-ing and music. They're in my blood. And from experience, I've seen that to do this job, you have to be a little out of this world. And I am proud to say I am.

ERI NEEMAN
Age: 20
Current occupation: TV host
Describe yourself in FIVE words: passionate, funny, sweet, loves people, hopeless romantic
What makes you the next MTV VJ? I've been knocking on your door since I was 16 and if I don't win this VJ Hunt, I'll come knocking again next year.

ANDI MANZANO
Age: 20
Current occupation: student
Favorite MTV shows: MTV Fashionista, Ramon Bautista show
What makes you the next MTV VJ? I am eager to learn and experience new things. I'm also game for everything, especially to touch the lives of people.

BRENT JAVIER
Age: 24
Current occupation: model / designer
Describe yourself in FIVE words: mysterious, driven, goofy, ambitious, messy
What makes you the next MTV VJ? I'd make you all proud and I'll love doing it.

LUCIA FISCHER
Age: 18
Current occupation: student
Describe yourself in FIVE words: egotistic, tolerant, freak of nature.
What makes you the next MTV VJ? I'm "controlled crazy" and I take things as they are. Attitude and personality are qualities I claim as my own.

Vote ___ for MTV VJ

Who will your mom vote for to be the next one?

Twelve hopefuls battle it out in challenges in the most fun talent search ever!

The lucky guy and gal will be joining the prestigious ranks of the likes of Cindy Kurleto, Donita Rose, KC Concepcion, Mariel Rodriguez, Marc Abaya, Francis Magalona and Sarah Meier among others who served up your favorite music videos and the hottest events during their stints as MTV VJs.

Cool guys and gals between 18 and 24 years old born with the gift of gab and brimming with confidence trooped to auditions in selected SM Malls all over the country to stake their claim at the most coveted job on TV. Others uploaded their audition home videos to the www.mtvphil.com to show MTV that they've the chops to make it all the way to the finals.

Twelve fun crazy sexy cool individuals made the cut and are set to battle it out to become the next MTV VJ. MTV VJs Anne Curtis, Victor Basa and Maggie Wilson will be helping out the celebrity judges to determine who's got what it takes to join their ranks. The winners will be chosen based on their performance in the challenges, public votes and judges' evaluation. One lucky guy and gal will earn their bragging rights as new MTV VJ when the winners are announced on June 22 at the Music Hall of the SM Mall of Asia.

SHEENA VERA CRUZ
Age: 24
Current occupation: All Stars member
What are you excited most about being an MTV VJ Hunt finalist? That I get to do spontaneous activities, meet people, travel and inspire others to be a VJ.

REGIE JUKES JR.
Age: 20
Current occupation: model
Describe yourself in FIVE words: I can never stop moving.
What makes you the next MTV VJ? I will do my best and never give up. And ever since I was a kid I wanted to be an MTV VJ.

NIÑA DOLINO
Age: 24
Current occupation: artist
Describe yourself in FIVE words: OC, one-man woman, competitive, prone to fads, passionate
What are you excited most about being an MTV VJ Hunt finalist? The experience and just keeping it real. If I can actually win it and be a VJ!

MARCO BORROMEO
Age: 23 (but I feel 18, seriously!)
Current occupation: part-time actor
Describe yourself in FIVE words: no one else like me (LOL)
What makes you the next MTV VJ? Anything you ask me to do, if I don't already know it, then I can learn it and do it.

ROXANNE BARCELO
Age: 22
Current occupation: performing artist
What are you excited most about being an MTV VJ Hunt finalist? You get to be part of a brand that promotes the artists of the Philippines. I just wanna have a lot of fun doing it; the experience will be worth it.

REUBEN UY
Age: 22
Current occupation: commercial model/actor/singer/dancer/host
Describe yourself in FIVE words: Scorpio, passionate, hyper, always improving
What are you excited most about being an MTV VJ Hunt finalist? The chance to be an MTV VJ and meeting Anne Curtis.

Revenge of the mom jeans

From page E1

'Wears Pants Near Chin'

For all intents and purposes, this fearsome look was actually first bandied about by Kate Moss. She rocked a pair of vintage Chloe jeans to the TopShop fashion show late last year. But in the wake of Miss Moss' about-face to all things sexy and sensible, celebs from J.Lo to ScarJo have turned their denims into push-up bras as well. The result, of course, has been pretty sartorially scary.

Without resorting to Photoshop geekery, the most intense fuglification has been done on Jessica Simpson. It was a pair of faded, pleated, stomach-skimming doom trousers that did her in, transforming her from a gymnorexic, man-mesmerizer into a deformed blow-up doll. (If she were Native American, the mile-long zipper of her pants would earn her the name Wears Pants Near Chin.) Unless she wants to be known as a newly-minted matron instead of a hot ex-wife, Jessica needs to seriously re-blond herself. Like, now.

When it comes to frequent frumping, however, the one that supplies the most tabloid fodder is still Mischa Barton. Not only has the ex-"OC" starlet been photographed by the paps in high-waisted pants, she has been spotted in high-waisted shorts to boot. (Pants, shorts—it's fug whichever way you stitch it.) Now, despite being skinny as a swizzle stick, why can't she get away with the sad sack mom pants? Answer: It's the cut. Mom jeans make everyone look dumb.

Moms, mom jeans, and Mother's Day

Often seen on the older crowd, mom jeans sit too high on the waist, too tapered on the legs, and too tight in all the wrong womanly places. Long considered a cardinal sin of fashion, mom jeans maximize the effects of multiple pregnancies and weight gain even to those who have never had kids. It has the power to push trunk junk to the side, before shifting it to the front as a wide-ass camel toe.

A couple years ago, "Saturday Night Live" introduced the term "mom jeans" and poked fun at these high-waisted horrors. Their mock JC Penney commercial had an unforgettable tag line: "This Mother's Day, don't give Mom that bottle of perfume. Give her something that says, 'I'm not a woman anymore. I'm a mom!'" Either out of touch with fashion or sexually repressed, the women in the sketch wore matronly jeans that were light in color and elastic at the waist.

Some would argue that these mom jeans are meant for a particular type of woman. The denim is soft and low-maintenance, so it's easy to care for. The fit and style are comfortable, which is what most on-the-go moms want and need. And most of all, mom jeans come with friendly price tags, perfect for mothers with limited budgets. In the States, they can be found in mass retailers like Target, Mervyn's, Wal-Mart, Kohl's, and yes, JC Penney. The ladies who buy them (and live in them) are probably practical and oblivious to the directives of fashion editors and designers. Which is precisely the problem. How can anyone with, like, okay vision want to wear something so insanely unflattering?

YOU'RE MY WONDERBRA. Scarlett Johansson rocks the mom jeans at Imitation of Christ

WEARS PANTS NEAR CHIN. From hot ex-wife, Jessica Simpson is now a newly-minted, Crayola-colored matron.

FERGIE FUG. The orange-colored Black Eyed Pants-Peer looking like a badly-dressed kid from the '70s.

Denim-colored dilemmas

In truth, denim is one fashion statement that never goes out of season. The amorphous mass of dye and thread can switch its steez to fit any lifestyle. It seems to have outgrown the fickle confines of fashion to become its own entity. Whether it's red-carpet ready (Dior Homme, Cloak), street-corner approved (Cheap Monday, Acne) or eco-credible (Loomstate, Howies), there's bound to be something for someone in the current jeans pantheon.

After dealing with washes, whiskers, and other bells and whistles, die-hard denim lovers also have to deal with the problem of cuts: slim, drainpipes, relaxed fits, low-rises, bootcuts, flares, and baggies. Now the high waist has become hopelessly au courant for celebrities and those who ape them.

18th Amendment is just one of the brands guilty for recycling this new/old trend. Founded by Aussie denim importer Rachel Rose and named after the American law known as Prohibition, the label is inspired by the glamorous and decadent lifestyle of gangsters and flappers. Their long-legged, high-waisted jeans are named after old-school movie stars like Lauren Bacall and Gina Lollobrigida. For something supposedly elegant, 18th Amendment jeans (at least the ones copped by Miss Barton) are tragically dumpy-looking. Again, groan.

Will flares rule the future?

A lot of jean junkies are happy that the era of ass-crack-baring low-rise jeans has finally drawn to a close. Most are also relieved that skinny jeans (at least for the ladies) and blue jeans tucked into boots are well and truly dead. Apart from red being the new gray, blah blah blah, what's next?

Experts believe that what we're seeing is coked-up fashion folly, where jeans brands multiply like mushrooms and trends come and go without you having the chance to take them for a spin to either embrace or diss them. In fact, this does not appear to be an interim period before one label reigns with one style. Trend-wise, it will be this schizo from now on. (The security of creased, bootcut Sevens is totally something of the past.) Rib-tickling mom jeans-whether skinny or flared—are looking to rule the earth next. Well, for a few seconds at least.

London newspaper The Times has advised the masses to approach the high-waisted frenzy with "extreme caution." I'd dare to go one step further and tell everyone to ignore these mom jeans shenanigans completely. See, if you snub something, it does go away eventually.

When the dust settles on this waist war and the madness finally anorexifies, there may be a middle ground, a give-and-take between the skinny and the flare, the low-rise and the high-waist. That could take a long, long, long, long, long, long time but who knows? In jeans world, anything is possible, and the reward for patience is a perfect pair. Now that mom jeans appear to have caught on, even if it's an assault to humanity, the best thing we can do is to brace ourselves. It's going to be one hell of a bumpy and frumpy ride.

Super Selections!
I love you Mom

Fine feast for mom

CHEF LAUDICO HAS A MESSAGE for everyone this mother's day—"The finest woman in our lives deserves the finest of feasts." And so he is inviting you to bring your mom to Chef Laudico Bistro Filipino (Ground Floor net 2 Building, 3rd Avenue, Fort Bonifacio Global City, Taguig) for a meal she wouldn't soon forget. Mom will also get an extra sweet surprise—a box of Belgian chocolate truffles. For reservations, call 856-0634, 856-0541, 0917800CHEF or e-mail cheflaudico@yahoo.com

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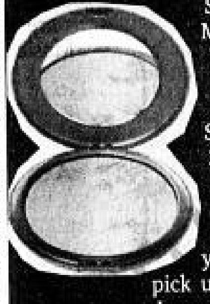

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And if you're feeling extra-generous, you might also want to pick up something else for your mom—Lancome's Limited Edition Bamboo Powder.

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Breastfeeding bonanza

AND YOU THOUGHT HAVING A whole bunch of people kiss at the same time was crazy.

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Children for Breastfeeding and Nurturers of the Earth also holds a previous record in partnership with the City of Manila when they mobilized 3,541 mothers and broke the USA record of 1,130 mothers in Berkeley, California last year.

Simultaneous breastfeeding started as a form of protest that mothers resorted to when they are admonished not to breastfeed in public [illegible]

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From page E4

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Growing up with just one parent instead of two is very normal nowadays. There is no such thing as a perfect parenting style or set up anymore. We are all somewhat dysfunctional in a very unique sense. My mother definitely had a huge impact on how I view things. As a child she instilled values that I hold on to until now, values I intend to pass on to my children in the future. I always say that I am the woman I am today because of my mother.

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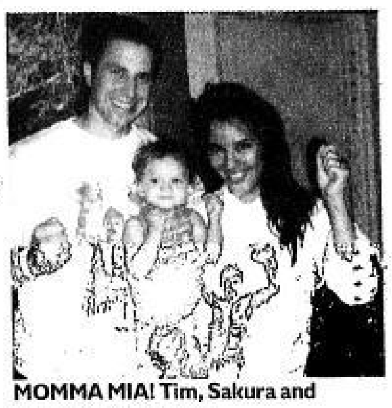

MOMMA MIA! Tim, Sakura and Giselle Tongi-Walters

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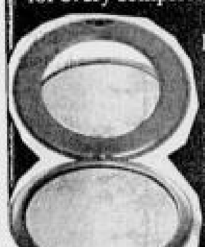

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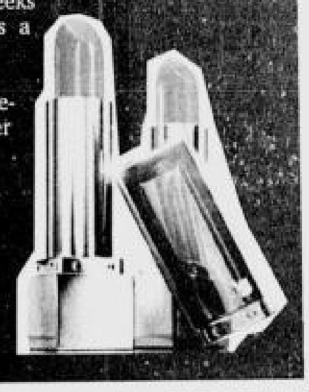

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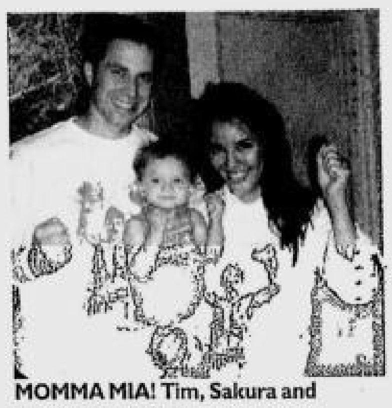

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Giselle Tongi-Walters is about to become a mom ... for the second time around

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interview:
How a real mom handled the "big

SUPER SCOOP!

Joining the Mama's Club

By Giselle Tongi

PRIOR TO JOINING THE MAma's club, I was a woman all about pursuing my career. It was all about my agenda. Social gatherings and networking filled my nights. I was constantly out and about and my apartment off of Sunset Boulevard in West Hollywood was a place just to hang my hat. I was always on dates to the movies. I slept in—late! But gone are those days of careless abandon.

My life actually means something worth writing about! The miracle of giving birth to my daughter Sakura Anne Marie, now 20 months, was an amazing experience beyond explanation. Becoming a mother beyond a doubt was the beginning of self discovery in my life. Believe me, nothing could have prepared me for the amount of love and awe and the feeling protectiveness that happened instantaneously when I had my daughter. That moment when she was born, when I looked at her and held her, there was a physical reaction that happened inside of me. I knew I could do and would do whatever it took to be there for her and raise her in the most wonderful way I could. That's a really hard thing to describe. Your personal things don't matter in that moment. It's the drive to do and say and be whatever you need to be in order to let them know that you're there and that they are safe. Motherhood has proved to be the ultimate "reward and sacrifice" at the same time.

Here in Los Angeles, I am a hands-on no-help-besides-my-husband-and-the-occasional-babysitter, stay-at-home mom. Trips to the farmers' market and the park to feed the ducks fill most of my days. Like most moms in the US, I am not alone. There are always classes at the Gymboree and playgroups with other stay-at-home mothers looking for some sort of excitement to escape the regularity of their days. Conversations with mommies you don't know at the local Target isn't strange when you have toddlers in strollers.

On the website salary.com, it is said that if a stay at home mother was paid like everyone else, their annual income would be $130,000.00!

I consider myself lucky that I can stay at home to be with my daughter every single day. How else would you explain a toddler who knows all her letter sounds and does sign language before she can even talk? But of course as soon 6 p.m. comes, I am ready to take a break and let her Daddy take over.

When I brought Sakura home to Manila for the first time last year, my whole idea of motherhood became slightly blurred. Here I was in California living a very quiet life (besides the babbling of my kid) and Manila is the exact opposite of that. With lots of *yayas* and help at home, my old lifestyle crept back.

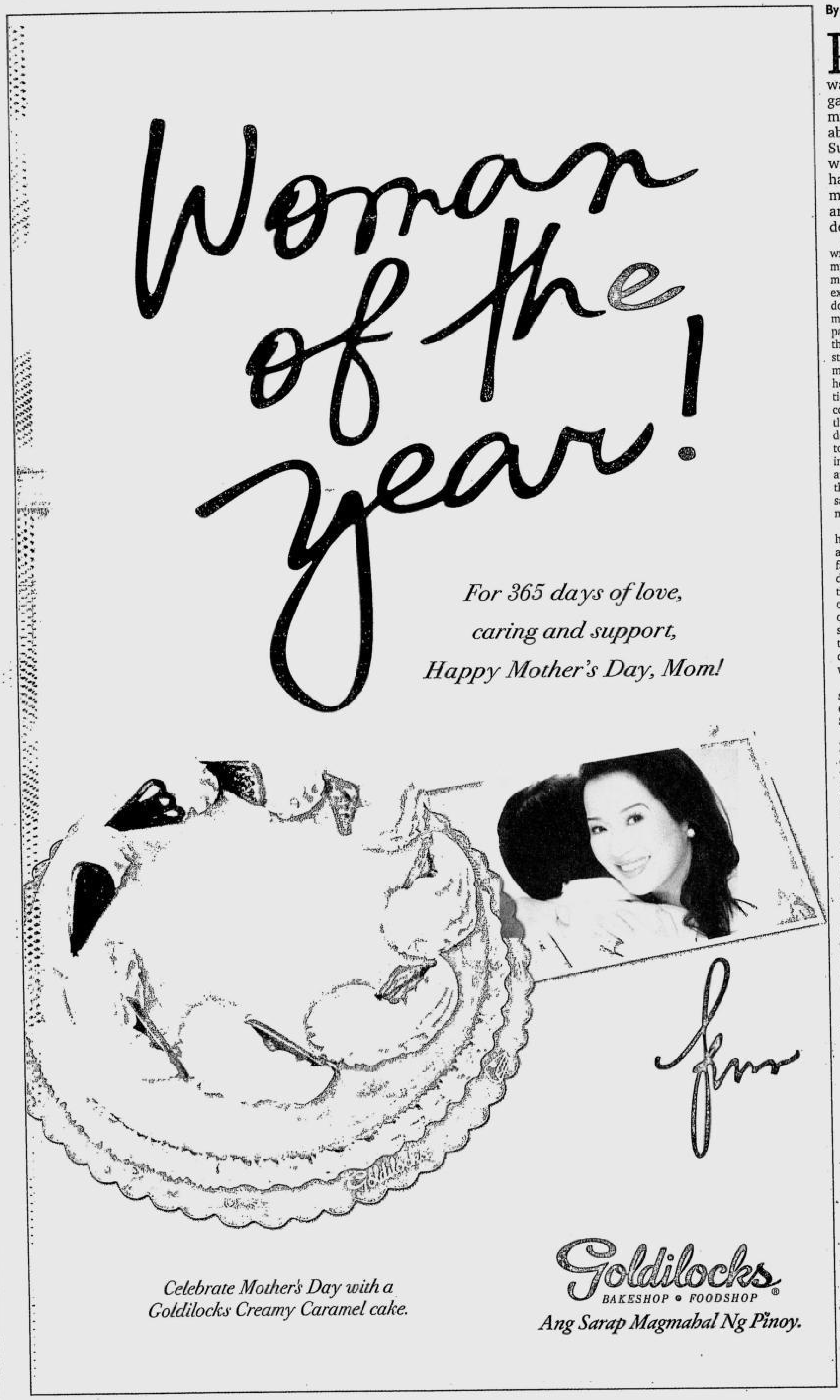
While the kid slept at night, I was out and about town, catching up with friends. With the hectic work loads and shooting schedules, making time for my baby girl was difficult. I admit I felt guilty of not spending as much time with her as she is used to. I realized that being a mommy is a lot easier with help in the Philippines; however it also means having the *yayas* raise your children instead of you. Each situation has its own pros and cons.

The Gift of unconditional love

The mother's love for her child is the strongest love of all. It is an innate, natural love given without reservation. It is offered without expectation of reciprocation. Although nothing is more instinctive than a mother's love, learning to love unconditionally is both a choice and a challenge. But anything that is worth having is hard work right?

In the early months of my daughters' life, I remember getting a stiff neck often from looking down at this amazing human being in my arms! Breastfeeding her for seven months was not easy but as they say it's the best gift you can give to your baby. To be able to nourish and give life to your child is truly the gift of unconditional love. Imagine being able to completely comfort another human being, to know when they are hungry or need to just be held or have their nappy changed. You put things aside and realize that is your priority, and that's just how it has to be. You always love your children no matter where they are or what they are doing. They are always a part of you.

JOINING/ E3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IN THIS ISSUE

Thank God for mothers /F4

Stars behind bars

By Nestor U. Torre

THE POSSIBILITY OF PARIS HILTON HAVING to spend 45 days behind bars has shocked all of Hollywood—as though Martha Stewart's own run-in with the law never happened.

How quickly stars forget that, like it or not, they're role models, so when they run afoul of the long arm of the law, the sentence they're given is sometimes harsher and more cautionary than those meted out to noncelebrities who commit the same offense.

Long sentence

Stewart's long sentence for insider stock trading was a shocker, because she was as goody-two-shoes as a TV icon could get. It was like learning that your favorite aunt was canoodling with the friendly neighborhood plumber in the laundry room.

Don't look now, but Paris' threatened vacation in the LA county jail could turn out to be an even bigger shocker, despite its being shorter.

This is because Paris is Paris—meaning, young, privileged, beautiful, thin as a thistle, sassy, pouty, and loves to give the conservative mainstream world the finger.

So, for many of the people she's irritated or insulted, and the many more who envy her for her fame, beauty and wealth, Paris' date with the legal locksmith is a comeuppance that's taken too long in coming.

Piously, they hope that it will pop her ego's hot-air balloon, and prompt her to see the light and mend her ways—like our First Gentleman's own recent near-encounter with mortality.

More honestly, they bitchily enjoy the prospect of the high-flying heiress and star being cut down to size, and being forced to spend a month and a half of her life in a small cell with the toilet bowl constantly staring her in the face.

Severity

For her part, Paris is shocked by her sentence's exaggerated severity. For once, however, she can't give the system the saucy finger, since that would lead to an even longer time away from her boy toys and the jetset party scene.

As for the general public, it is hoped that it too will learn from Paris' impending imprisonment. Not in the "*buti nga sa kanya, akala mo kung sino*" mold, but more along the lines of a greater respect for the law, which in Paris' case, has shown that it doesn't play favorites, not even where the Parises and Hiltons of the world are concerned.

—But, hold your horses, it looks like Paris' "jailhouse rock" saga isn't over yet—not by a long shot. After meekly taking her sentence on the chin for a couple of days, Paris has served notice that she won't go into the slammer like a lamb mutely being led to the slaughter.

More severe

She's appealing the "harsh" sentence, which she describes as "cruel," and her lawyers say is about nine times more severe than other cases in the league of Paris' infraction, violation of DUI probation, are usually penalized with.

And, even if she does end up behind bars, Paris could "benefit" from it in a weird way. How? The wacky logic goes like this: Paris has become famous (or infamous) for flouting the rules of conservative, nonprivileged mainstream USA; her fans love her when she's being naughty—and serving jail term simply adds another exciting twist to her contrary nature.

So, even as some nonfans hiss, "Serves you right!," some fans gleefully egg her on, and urge that the LA county jail be renamed "The Paris Hilton!"

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ComicRelief

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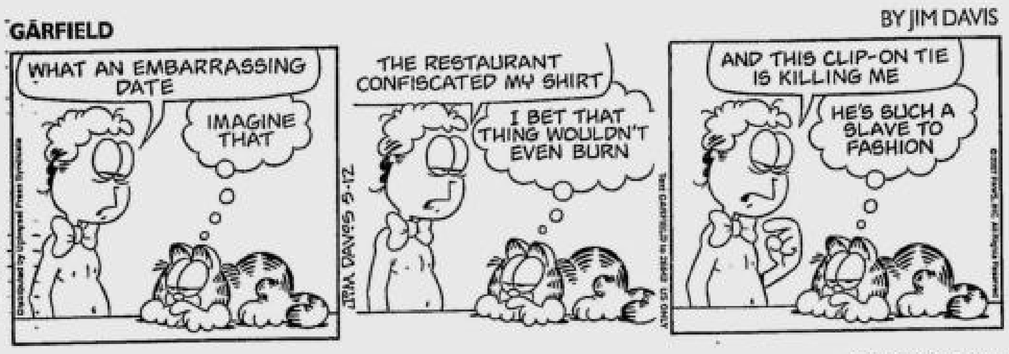
SATURDAY, MAY 12, 2007

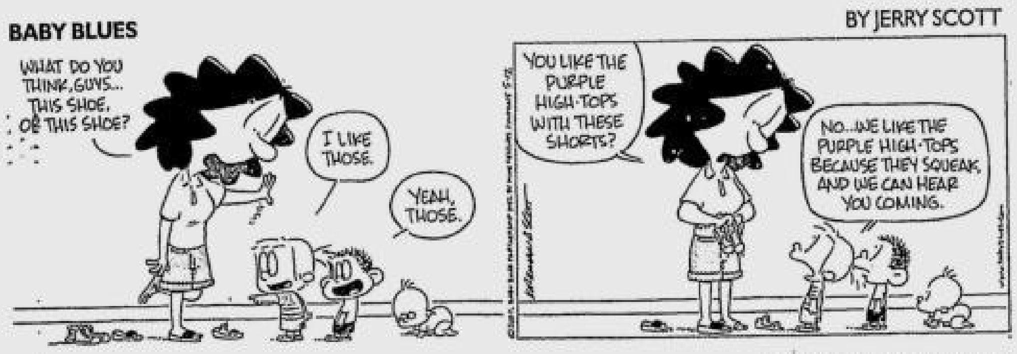
GARFIELD

BY JIM DAVIS


WHAT AN EMBARRASSING DATE
IMAGINE THAT
THE RESTAURANT CONFISCATED MY SHIRT
I BET THAT THING WOULDN'T EVEN BURN
AND THIS CLIP-ON TIE IS KILLING ME
HE'S SUCH A SLAVE TO FASHION
JPM DAVIS 5-12

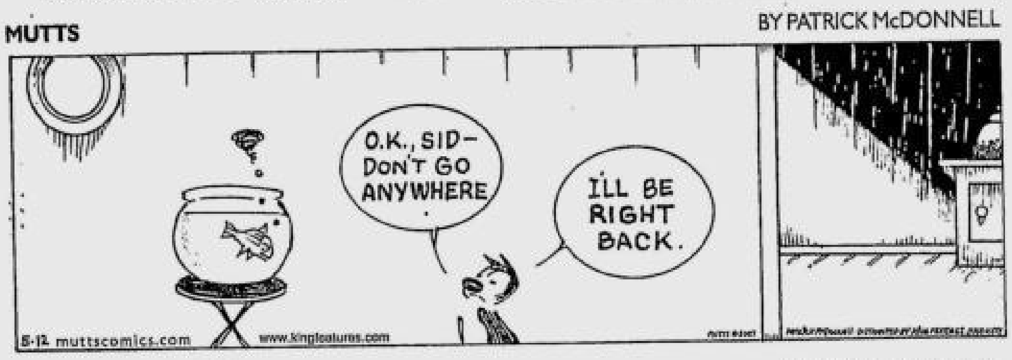
BABY BLUES

BY JERRY SCOTT


WHAT DO YOU THINK, GUYS... THIS SHOE, OR THIS SHOE?
I LIKE THOSE.
YEAH, THOSE.
YOU LIKE THE PURPLE HIGH-TOPS WITH THESE SHORTS?
NO...WE LIKE THE PURPLE HIGH-TOPS BECAUSE THEY SQUEAK, AND WE CAN HEAR YOU COMING.

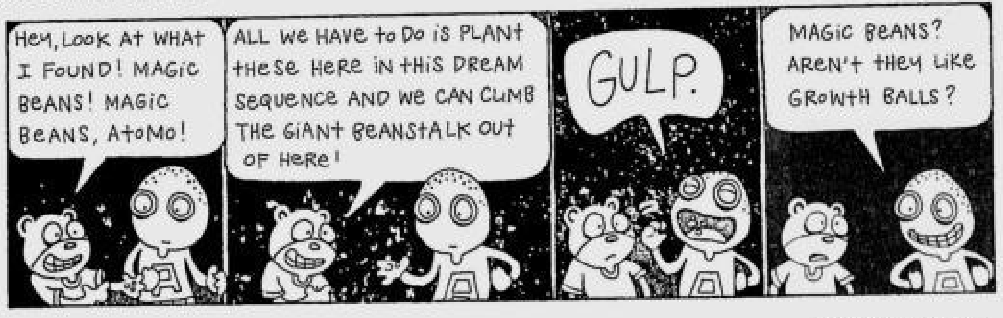
MUTTS

BY PATRICK McDONNELL


O.K., SID— DON'T GO ANYWHERE
I'LL BE RIGHT BACK.
5-12 muttscomics.com
www.kingfeatures.com

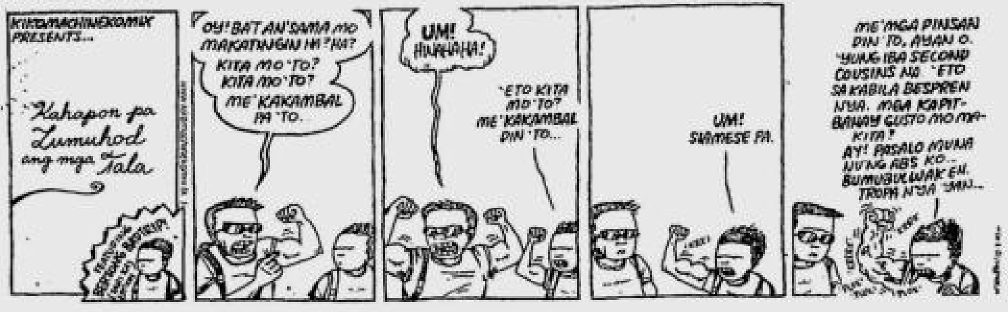
ATOMO AND WEBOY

BY LYRA GARCELLANO


Hey, Look At WHAT I FOUND! MAGIC BeANS! MAGIC BeANS, AtoMo!
ALL We HAVe to Do is PLANT these Here iN tHiS DReAM Sequence AND We CAN CLiMB THe GIANT BeANStALK out OF Here!
GULP.
MAGiC BeANS? AReN't they Like GRowtH BALLS?

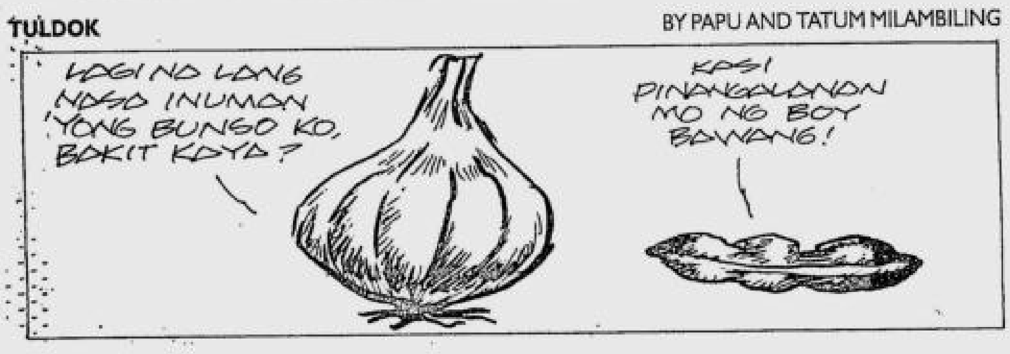
KIKO MACHINE

BY MANIX ABRERA


KIKOMACHINEKOMIX PRESENTS...
Kahapon pa Lumuhod ang mga Tala
OY! BAT AN'SAMA MO MAKATINGIN HA? HA? KITA MO 'TO? KITA MO 'TO? ME' KAKAMBAL PA 'TO.
UM! HWAHAHA!
'ETO KITA MO 'TO? ME' KAKAMBAL DIN 'TO...
UM! SIAMESE PA.
ME' MGA PINSAN DIN 'TO. AYAN O. 'YUNG IBA SECOND COUSINS NA. 'ETO SA KABILA BESPREN NYA. MGA KAPIT-BAHAY GUSTO MO MA-KITA? AY! PASALO MUNA NG'NG ABS KO.. BUMUBULWAK EH. TROPA NYA 'YAN...

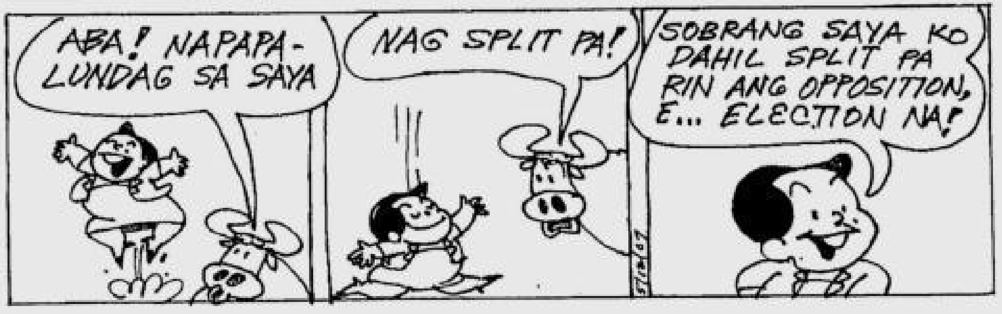
TULDOK

BY PAPU AND TATUM MILAMBILING


LAGI NA LANG NASA INUMAN 'YONG BUNSO KO, BAKIT KAYA?
KASI PINANGALANAN MO NG BOY BAWANG!

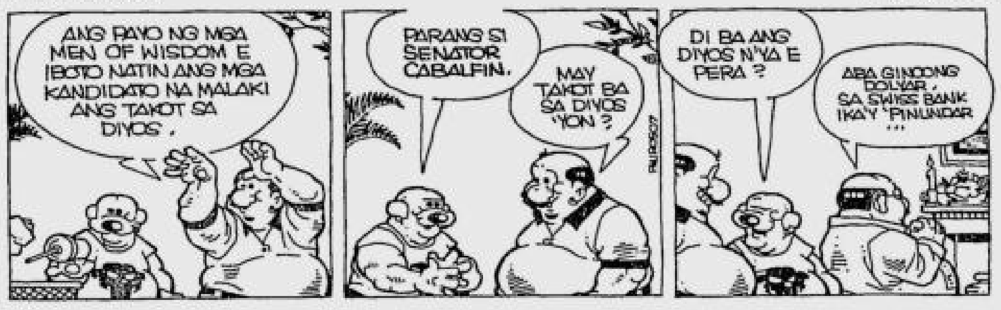
A. LIPIN

BY JESS ABRERA


ABA! NAPAPA-LUNDAG SA SAYA
NAG SPLIT PA!
SOBRANG SAYA KO DAHIL SPLIT PA RIN ANG OPPOSITION, E... ELECTION NA!

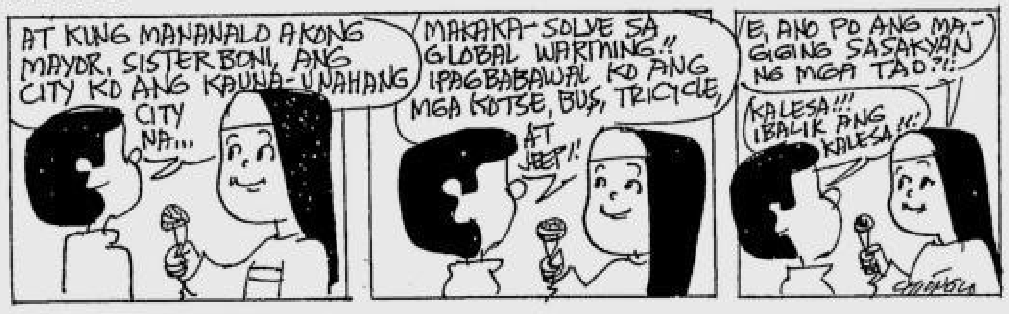
PUGAD BABOY

BY P.M. JUNIOR


ANG PAYO NG MGA MEN OF WISDOM E IBOTO NATIN ANG MGA KANDIDATO NA MALAKI ANG TAKOT SA DIYOS.
PARANG SI SENATOR CABALFIN.
MAY TAKOT BA SA DIYOS 'YON?
DI BA ANG DIYOS N'YA E PERA?
ABA GINOONG DOLYAR, SA SWISS BANK IKA'Y 'PINUNDAR ...

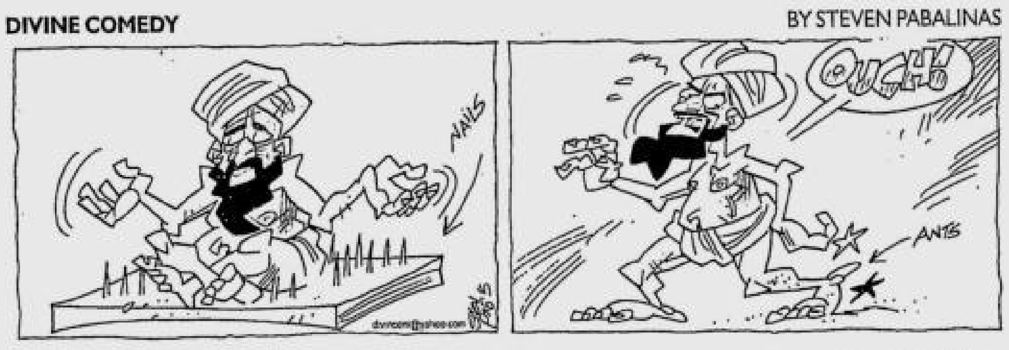
LOVEKNOTS

BY ELIZABETH CHIONGLO


AT KUNG MANANALO AKONG MAYOR, SISTER BONI, ANG CITY KO ANG KAUNA-UNAHANG CITY NA...
MAKAKA-SOLVE SA GLOBAL WARMING!! IPAGBABAWAL KO ANG MGA KOTSE, BUS, TRICYCLE, AT JEEP!!
E, ANO PO ANG MAGIGING SASAKYAN NG MGA TAO?!!
KALESA!!! IBALIK ANG KALESA!!!

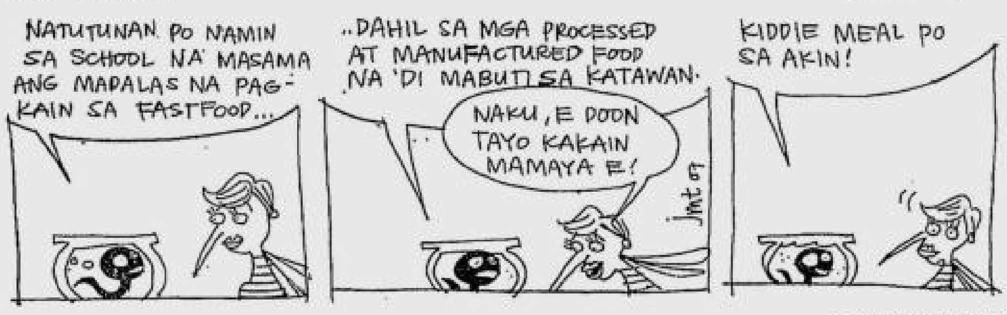
DIVINE COMEDY

BY STEVEN PABALINAS


NAILS
OUCH!
ANTS

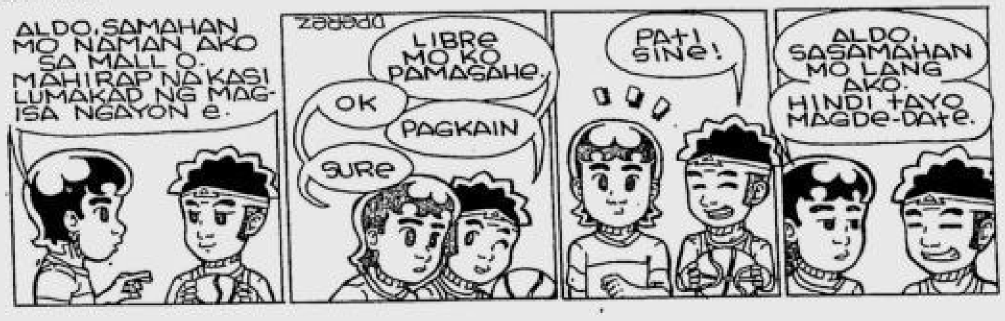
MIKROKOSMOS

BY JOMIKE TEJIDO


NATUTUNAN PO NAMIN SA SCHOOL NA MASAMA ANG MADALAS NA PAG-KAIN SA FASTFOOD...
..DAHIL SA MGA PROCESSED AT MANUFACTURED FOOD NA 'DI MABUTI SA KATAWAN.
NAKU, E DOON TAYO KAKAIN MAMAYA E!
KIDDIE MEAL PO SA AKIN!

SALAMIN

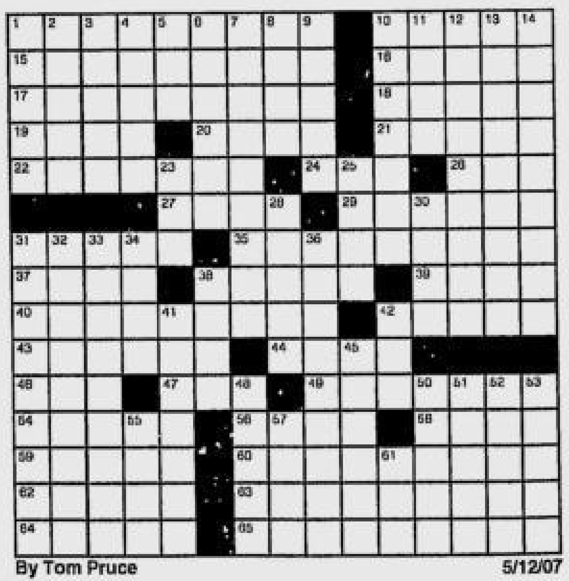
BY DARWIN PEREZ


ALDO, SAMAHAN MO NAMAN AKO SA MALL O. MAHIRAP NA KASI LUMAKAD NG MAG-ISA NGAYON e.
LIBRE MO KO PAMASAHE.
OK
PAGKAIN
SURE
PATI SINE!
ALDO, SASAMAHAN MO LANG AKO. HINDI TAYO MAGDE-DATE.

DAILY CROSSWORD

ACROSS
1 Inconclusive conclusion
10 Sculptor Oldenburg
15 Bad breath
16 Psychologist May
17 Persons of high standing
18 Terminator
19 Sup
20 Richard of "Chicago"
21 Perforated utensil
22 Slim
24 Nordic jets' letters
26 Scoffer's comment
27 Humanistic disciplines
29 Lawmaking body
31 Hardy wheat
35 Meeting rooms
37 Claire and Balin
38 Conflagrations
39 Find a perch
40 Observers' position
42 Musical pieces
43 Duke of the Dodgers
44 Remainder
46 NASA partner
47 Morning hrs.
49 Slaughtered animal's body
54 Muffles
56 Hand-tied fly
58 High: pref.
59 Illegal contribution
60 Secular priest
62 Burton of "Roots"
63 Town north of Denver
64 Idyllic gardens
65 Clairvoyant women

DOWN
1 Storage buildings
2 Sri Lanka language
3 Skirt style
4 Fabric from flax
5 Tours summer
6 Dealer's add-on?
7 Discover
8 Cake layer
9 Mississippi quartet?
10 Metal cup containing burning oil
11 Burt's ex
12 Brightest star in Taurus
13 Uplifting
14 Poor losers
23 Aswan or Hoover
25 Buyer-beware warning
28 More certain
30 __ contendere
31 Feign
32 Without coverage?
33 Issuing in waves
34 Played for a sap
36 Treat with sacrilege
38 Business
41 Renters
42 Orch. section
45 Preserver
48 Footlong containers
50 Complains
51 Otherwise called
52 Gape
53 Goes under
55 "Promised Land" author Abba
57 Gaelic tongue
61 Sugary suffix



By Tom Pruce
Chicago, IL

5/12/07

Friday's Puzzle Solved

C	A	S	P	A	R	■	M	R	I	■	A	S	T	A
S	I	N	I	S	E	■	E	O	N	■	V	I	E	S
A	L	L	A	S	A	N	D	B	S	■	I	O	N	S
■	■	■	■	E	D	I	E	■	I	L	L	U	S	E
S	L	O	B	S	■	X	A	N	D	Y	A	X	E	S
H	A	R	A	S	S	■	■	Y	E	N	■	■	■	■
A	V	O	N	■	A	R	U	M	■	D	I	C	E	S
M	I	N	D	O	N	E	S	P	S	A	N	D	Q	S
S	N	O	O	D	■	A	C	H	E	■	F	R	U	G
■	■	■	■	D	O	T	■	■	A	D	R	O	I	T
S	A	N	D	L	B	A	N	K	■	R	A	M	P	S
H	E	A	R	Y	E	■	I	I	I	I	■	■	■	■
U	S	N	A	■	R	A	N	D	D	F	U	N	D	S
T	O	C	K	■	O	P	T	■	E	T	H	E	R	S
E	P	E	E	■	N	O	H	■	A	S	S	A	Y	S

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5/12/07

HOROSCOPE

YOU BORN TODAY: You're intelligent and well-spoken. You have a dry, ironic sense of humor. (You're also a bit of a tease.) You don't like phonies; in fact, you'll expose them in a flash. You're a natural leader. You're self-assured and confident. You have your own style of doing things. This year could be one of the best years of your life—dream big! **Birthdate of:** Tony Hawk, superstar skateboarder; Katharine Hepburn, actress; Gabriel Byrne, actor.

ARIES (March 21 to April 19): Be very careful with financial issues today. You could fool yourself about something, you could be deceived by others, or you could make an error. Be cautious in order to protect yourself.

TAURUS (April 20 to May 20): No doubt, people will misunderstand your intentions today. They might literally misunderstand your words. Conversations with parents, bosses and authorities are particularly susceptible to confusion.

GEMINI (May 21 to June 20): Be extra-clear in your communication with everyone today. If you feel someone is not being straight with you, you could be right. Trust your gut instincts.

CANCER (June 21 to July 22): Something having to do with friends or groups is confusing today. You don't have all the facts. This could be accidental, or someone could be misleading you.

LEO (July 23 to Aug. 22): This is a poor day to agree to deadlines or important requests from bosses and VIPs. They might not be sure what they want, and you might not be sure what they want as well!

VIRGO (Aug. 23 to Sept. 22): Avoid political or religious arguments today. They will only be clouded by foggy reasoning. Expect confusion in matters related to education, publishing and the media. Go slowly.

LIBRA (Sept. 23 to Oct. 22): Postpone important decisions about insurance matters, wills, estates, shared property, taxes and debt. Either you don't have all the facts or the facts you have are incorrect.

SCORPIO (Oct. 23 to Nov. 21): It's very easy for partners and close friends to jump to the wrong conclusion today. Expect others to misunderstand your intentions. (This could also happen the other way around.)

SAGITTARIUS (Nov. 22 to Dec. 21): If you're not sure what's happening at work today, don't act. Co-workers might be confused or working with incorrect information. Someone might even try to mislead you.

CAPRICORN (Dec. 22 to Jan. 19): Your energy to work with children today might be undermined by somebody else. Someone might misinterpret what your intentions are. Be very clear in everything you do.

AQUARIUS (Jan. 20 to Feb. 18): Secrets related to family matters might be revealed today. Expect confusion in domestic discussions. Do your best to clarify everything.

PISCES (Feb. 19 to March 20): Don't worry if you spend a lot of time daydreaming. Quite likely, you sort of feel "out of it" today. (It's that kind of day.) We all need to space out at times.

CONCEPTIS SU DOKU

Conceptis Sudoku by Dave Green

	5				4	6		
		8			3		7	
							1	
		4				2	9	
		5		9		3		
	8	1				5		
	9							
	6		3			1		
		7	1				8	

Difficulty Level ★★★★

5/12

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HOW TO PLAY SU DOKU

Fill the grid so that every column, every row and every 3x3 box contains the digits 1 to 9.
Tips and program at www.sudoku.com

Answer to previous puzzle

7	5	9	6	4	1	3	2	8
3	2	6	7	8	5	1	9	4
8	4	1	3	9	2	6	5	7
9	6	5	8	7	3	2	4	1
1	7	2	9	5	4	8	3	6
4	3	8	1	2	6	5	7	9
6	1	4	5	3	9	7	8	2
5	9	7	2	6	8	4	1	3
2	8	3	4	1	7	9	6	5

Difficulty Level ★★★★

Disney offers Princess gowns to blushing brides

SO MANY BRIDES SAY they want to look like a princess on their wedding day—and now we're about to find out if they mean really mean it.

The Walt Disney Co. has teamed with bridal designer Kirstie Kelly to create a collection of gowns inspired by the favorite Disney princess characters, Cinderella, Sleeping Beauty, Snow White, Ariel from "The Little Mermaid" Belle from "Beauty and The Beast" and Jasmine from "Aladdin."

But Kelly is quick to point out that "inspired by" doesn't mean gowns that look like they came from the animated movies, which have been translated many times over into dress-up costumes for little girls. Instead, the designs attempt to channel the personality of each princess in terms suitable for a real-life, modern woman.

Something in common

"We wanted women to feel like they had something in common with these princesses. We had to identify who the princesses are now and whom does the everyday girl relate to," Kelly said during a telephone interview prior to the gowns' runway debut during Bridal Fashion Week in Manhattan.

A mood and fashion sensibility was assigned to each princess-themed gown: Cinderella is for the classic glamour bride; Sleeping Beauty is about pretty romance; Snow White is sweet elegance; Ariel is sultry allure; Belle is stylish sophistication; and Jasmine is bohemian chic.

"It actually touches on every type of wedding," explained Kelly, who also has her own bridal couture label. "For the destination wedding there's Ariel or Jasmine, but if you're having 500 people in a ballroom, you're definitely the Cinderella gown."

Slimmer shape

When she got married several years ago, she would have gone for the Cinderella look, Kelly said, although now she would lean towards the slimmer shape, such as the Jasmine gown.

Andy Mooney, chairman of Disney Consumer Products Worldwide, said that when the company began developing the marketing concept of the princesses six or seven years ago, the company discovered that the demographic wasn't limited to the 2- to 8-year-olds Disney was expecting. "We've been blown away how strong the demand is for princess thematic things in almost every stage of a woman's life," he said.

Adult women buy into a sort of lifestyle role play, he explained. As a brand, Disney has a built-in reputation for quality and trust, Mooney added, so it doesn't start from scratch when it enters categories such as cruise travel, better furniture or wedding gowns.

Decision

The decision to go into the bridal market was largely made because of that princess dream so many brides talk about, Mooney said. "Every bride wants to be Cinderella but she also wants to be classic, feminine and beautiful. Kirstie has allowed a woman to enter the princess fantasy but in a way that's absolutely appropriate for the event."

Plus, 1,500 couples do say "I do" at Walt Disney World Resort in Florida each year.

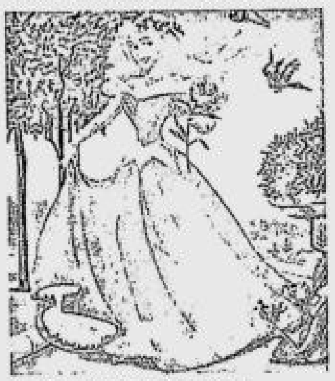
The gowns will be sold at bridal salons. Kelly said Disney identified a void in the mid-tier level of gowns for brides who want to spend between $1,100-$3,400.

Women often start their gown shopping with the idea that they want to be different from everyone else, but they change their tune once they start trying on dresses. "Looking like Cinderella is probably something they never considered before they got engaged, but then the traditional side almost always comes out. It's hard to resist romance and sparkle," Kelly said.

Good chance

That said, bridal retailers are always looking for the new thing that can help their store stand out and that's what gives Disney a good chance at the market, said Carley Roney, editor in chief of TheKnot.com.

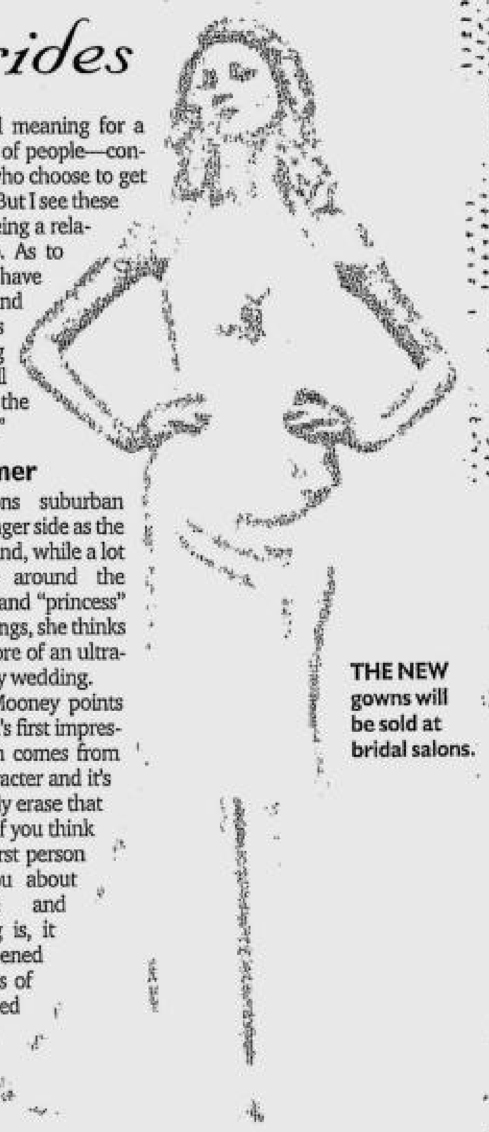
"As for consumers, the success of this line all depends on the dress design," she said in an e-mail to the AP. "The Disney brand has a strong, positive, emotional meaning for a surprising number of people—consider the couples who choose to get married at Disney. But I see these 'Disneyphiles' as being a relatively small group. As to the women who have no real Disney brand loyalty, if the dress designs are strong enough, they will probably overlook the brand association."


A LIKENESS of Sleeping Beauty's attire is included in the lineup.

Target customer

Roney envisions suburban brides on the younger side as the target customer. And, while a lot of women toss around the words "fairytale" and "princess" about their weddings, she thinks they're talking more of an ultra-luxurious celebrity wedding.

But Disney's Mooney points out that a woman's first impression of love often comes from an animated character and it's hard to completely erase that from her mind. "If you think about who the first person who teaches you about love, romance and Prince Charming is, it probably happened between the ages of 2-5 and included Disney." *AP*


THE NEW gowns will be sold at bridal salons.

Al Gore takes social mission to Tribeca film fest

THE SIXTH ANNUAL TRIBECA Film Festival opened recently at a gala hosted by former Vice President Al Gore as the festival expanded its social mission with a slate of global warming-themed films.

The festival, which was founded after the Sept. 11 attacks to rejuvenate Lower Manhat tan, opened with the premiere of nine short films produced by SOS (Save Our Selves), an organization to raise awareness on climate change.

The night signified not only the opening of this year's festival, but also the growing connection between filmmakers and the issue of global warming. Gore, who starred in the Oscar-winning documentary "An Inconvenient Truth," said artists play an important role in the movement.

Emotions

"Art, music, film, dance, poetry all the arts have long been our greatest tools to explore the regions of imagination that defy our efforts to think rationally about subjects that our emotions tell us are too painful to contemplate," he said.

Gore spoke optimistically of the potential for change. "Somehow, we do have to penetrate that shell of denial," he said.

Tribeca, which held its first festival in 2002, was founded by Robert De Niro, his producing partner, Jane Rosenthal, and her husband, the entrepreneur Craig Hatkoff.

"The Tribeca Film Festival sprang from needs of community," Rosenthal said. "We've learned that every bit helps."

Decision

Though festivals customarily open with the premiere of a high-profile feature-length film, Rosenthal told The Associated Press ahead of Tribeca's opening that the decision was easy.

"I don't know what a traditional festival is," Rosenthal said. "Being able to shine a light on an issue and show interesting short films is better than showing some mediocre movie."

SOS founder Kevin Wall said the organization has commissioned 60 short films. The nine shown Wednesday night generally ran about five minutes long and sometimes felt like public service announcements.

They included visions of a flooded New York City, an animated hippo and turtle talking about changing temperatures, footage from a giant landfill in Brazil and a reminder of the especially harsh effect global warming is expected to have on Africa.

GORE. New York's Mayor Bloomberg calls him "the world's hottest leading man."

Documentary

Directors Heidi Ewing and Rachel Grady, whose documentary "Jesus Camp" played at Tribeca last year and went on to land an Oscar nomination, showed a film entitled "One Less Car" that showed the benefits of riding a bike in New York City.

Rob Reiner, whose films include "When Harry Met Sally" and "Stand By Me," presented a 15-minute film on the reunion of Spinal Tap, the mock heavy metal band immortalized in his 1984 mockumentary "This Is Spinal Tap."

The band will play in London on July 7 as part of the global Live Earth concerts, also produced by SOS. The concerts will raise funds for the Alliance for Climate Protection, of which Gore is chairman.

The festivities concluded with a three-song set from Jon Bon Jovi. He played Leonard Cohen's "Hallelujah," his own "Livin' on a Prayer" and the Beatles' "Here Comes the Sun."

Fight

"I'm not here to pick a fight," Bon Jovi said. "I'm here as a dad; I'm here as a husband; I'm here as a citizen of the country and the world."

Others in attendance included Martin Scorsese, Petra Nemcova, Jimmy Fallon, Diego Luna, Christopher Walken, Paul Haggis and Josh Lucas.

At a press conference for the festival, New York Mayor Michael Bloomberg called Gore "the world's hottest leading man." *AP*

Marriage constantly attacked in media

By Lilia Borlongan-Alvarez

THE ENTERTAINMENT WORLD has subconsciously stultified the sanctity of marriage. Take a closer look at the plots of our local movies and TV programs: They center on infidelity, betrayal, and vengeance.

Some movies concern themselves with perversion. Films glorifying incest even earn the nod of award-giving bodies. Sitcoms in the tradition of "Sex and the City" and "Friends," dark comedy series like "Desperate Housewives," as well as inane sitcoms aired on local channels gnaw away at the essence of marriage and family life.

Do you want to ensure success at the box office? Then, produce movies about infidelity, rape, divorce, love triangles, and serial killings. Conventional themes and stories about middle-aged couples celebrating their silver wedding anniversaries are, more often than not, flops.

Illegitimate children

Primetime news programs and gossip magazines are not spared. Every now and then, we hear or read about celebrities getting involved with married co-workers. We are bombarded with stories about their illegitimate children and extramarital affairs.

TV comedies, comic strips, magazines, and serial novels portray the henpecked husband as someone ridiculed by his mother-in-law because of his utter unworthiness. The wife, on the other hand, is pictured as the efficient manager of household affairs. She drags her husband home by the ear after he sneaks into a nearby hall for a game of billiards.

The headlines of local tabloids scream extramarital sex, weird sex, free sex, premarital sex, violence and sex, war and sex, etc. Publishers engaged in yellow journalism are only too happy to give readers a steady diet of stories about sex, sex, and more sex.

Message

The message being sent by all these stories is: It is perfectly "normal" to cheat on one's spouse and sexual deviation and infidelity are sometimes "good" for a marriage. Jokes published in newspapers and magazines make a mockery of the marital state—that middle-aged husbands are better off without their middle-aged wives!

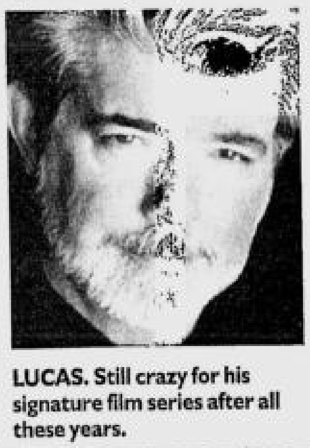
What has caused this state of affairs? And why the big fuss? Well, many will say that everyone's doing it, anyway!

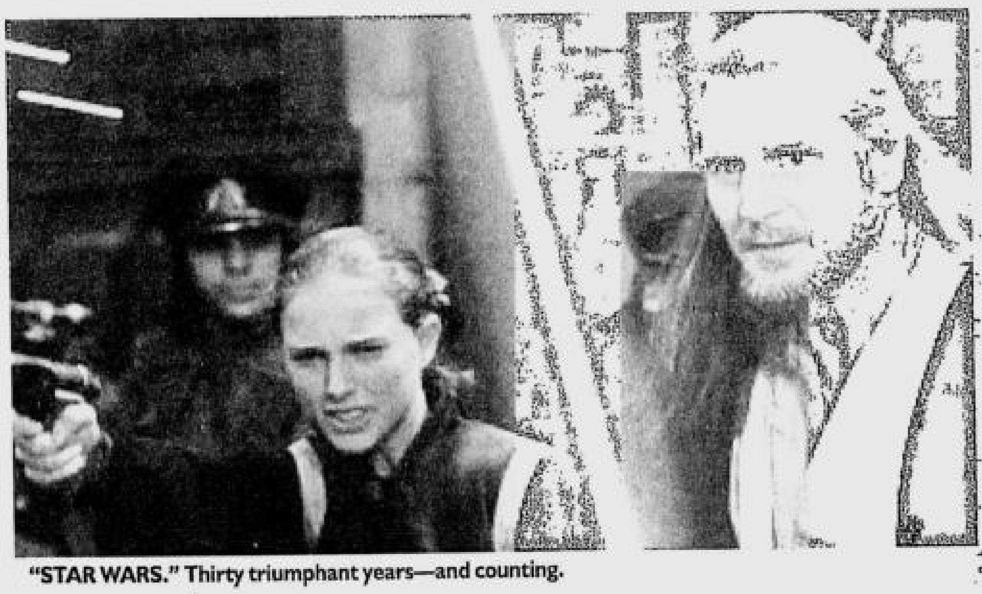
It's not right to say that the media is merely giving the public what it wants to read. It has the responsibility to uplift the public's taste and standards. True, viewers and readers have a choice *not* to patronize an irresponsible radio or TV program. But the entertainment media should be held accountable for the content of their shows' messages. Marriage is serious business—it's a long-term commitment bound by God.

Academy celebrates 'STAR WARS'

DOZENS OF TICKET holders wound their way around the building and in from the dark side all to see a 30-year-old movie that's been long available on video, released and rereleased to theaters, and shown countless times on TV.

Then again, the film was "Star Wars," which marks its 30th anniversary next month. Director George Lucas and other "Star Wars" principals were in attendance at the Academy of Motion Pictures Arts and Sciences screening Monday night to reflect on the legacy of the film that opened on May 25, 1977.


LUCAS. Still crazy for his signature film series after all these years.


"STAR WARS." Thirty triumphant years—and counting.

Best part

Lucas said he's still crazy for "Star Wars" after all these years. "The best part of the movies, 'Star Wars' and 'Indiana Jones,' too, is that I still love to watch them, just like anybody else does. If they're on TV and I turn it on halfway through, I can't turn it off, even if I've seen it a million times."

Also present were Mark Hamill, who played Luke Skywalker, as well as Oscar-winning visual-effects creator Richard Edlund and former 20th Century Fox executive Alan Ladd Jr. They, and others associated with "Star Wars," participated in a panel discussion after the film's sold-out screening.

The just-released book, "The Making of Star Wars: The Definitive Story Behind the Original Film," reveals Ladd not only green-lit the project, but also successfully fought for Lucas and company when the studio wanted to pull back its support at the 11th hour.

Huge surprise

Ladd told AP Television that the film's box-office triumph (it's No. 2 all-time in North America, with a $460-million gross, behind "Titanic," which grossed $600 million) nevertheless came as a huge surprise. *AP*

'Saan Nagtatago si Happiness?' at StarMall Las Piñas

TO MARK ITS FOURTH OUT-OF-School Youth Teaching Mission, the Living God Catholic Charismatic Outreach Ministry will sponsore the back-to-back movie premiere and concert, "Saan Nagtatago si Happiness?," on May 26 in Las Pinas City.

The movie, a digital dramedy starring Andy Bais, Mica Torre and Caridad Sanchez, tells the heartwarming story of an ice-cream vendor in search of his long-lost mother. It was an entry to the Second Cinemalaya Film Festival last year and topped the festival's box-office ranking.

Screening

Bro. Boy Tolentino, SLGFI President, declares, "'Saan Nagtatago si Happiness?' will uplift the spirit of the Filipinos during troubled times." Its screening will be followed by a concert featuring Bais and Torre, with the special participation of SLGFI's youth.

"The back-to-back event is a fund-raising project of the foundation, and proceeds will be used to finance the non-formal education of our students," Bro. Boy explains. The SLGFI's long-term goal is to build a halfway shelter for these kids.

SLGFI's teaching mission started in 2003 with 21 children, 11 volunteer teachers, and five teaching aides. The students, who were either forced to quit school because of poverty, were handpicked from among the underprivileged children in the Las Piñas.

"Saan Nagtatago si Happiness?" will be screened on May 26 at 3 p.m. at the StarMall Cinema in Pamplona, Las Piñas City. Call Sis. Tita Bauca at (02) 872-5947 or 0917 527-4276, or email slgccom@yahoo.com.

BAIS. Topbills the Cinemalaya blockbuster.

ROA. Also the mother of all needy movie workers at Mowelfund.

BING Pimentel (seated, fifth from left) with her husband Nene and family. (Standing, from left) Aquilino V, Jack, Koko, Lorraine and Alain Borghis, Teresa, Baljit Brar, Dominique, Luis and Petrina Gana. (Seated, from left) Ma. Lina and Aquilou, Jewel, Aquilino VI, Katrina and Gwen Gana.

Thank God for mothers

By Nestor U. Torre

WITH A SONG CONSTANTLY IN HER HEART, Lourdes "Bing" Pimentel brought up her six children with Sen. Aquilino "Nene" Pimentel Jr. both creatively and courageously, through thick and thin.

When times were good in Cagayan de Oro City, she concentrated on her kids' education, being a teacher herself. When Nene was jailed four times during the martial law period for dissent, Bing concentrated on imbuing herself and her children—Gwen, Maripet, Koko, Jack, Terelou and Inde—with the courage required to see them through the many dark and seemingly hopeless nights of those parlous years; when both fear and penury howled at their door.

Ordeal

Blessedly, the fears and terrors may have been great, but there was always Bing's music to calm those savage beasts. Gifted with the ability to turn thoughts, feelings and experiences into memorable words and music, Bing penned one song after another to soothe and inspire her family, and to make sense of the ordeal they were forced to undergo.

She didn't plan it that way, but after many years, her scores of songs served as a sort of deeply felt "musical biography" of her family's communal life. hearing those songs performed at family gatherings, Bing's friends urged her to share them with the public.

VERA-PEREZ. The movie industry's abiding and ageless matriarch.

Finally overcoming her natural reticence, she finally presented them as a very personal musical revue titled "Buhay—Isang Awit." Truly, her life *was* a series of songs, melodies of triumph and momentary despair, of love and loss—and all of the stirring emotions in between.

Series

Last year, Bing capped her series of musical shows with her first story musical, "Pag-ibig sa Bayan," which won accolades for her stirring anthems that vivified her family's daunting experience during marital law.

What new songs are being born in Bing's fertile creative imagination? She next wants to write music for her first musical for children—this time, not just with her own kids in mind, but also all of the children in the country, so that they too can derive inspiration, beauty and strength from the music of their lives.

On Mother's Day tomorrow, we also pay loving tribute to the other mothers in the arts and entertainment, whose inspiring love for their children has touched out hearts. They include:

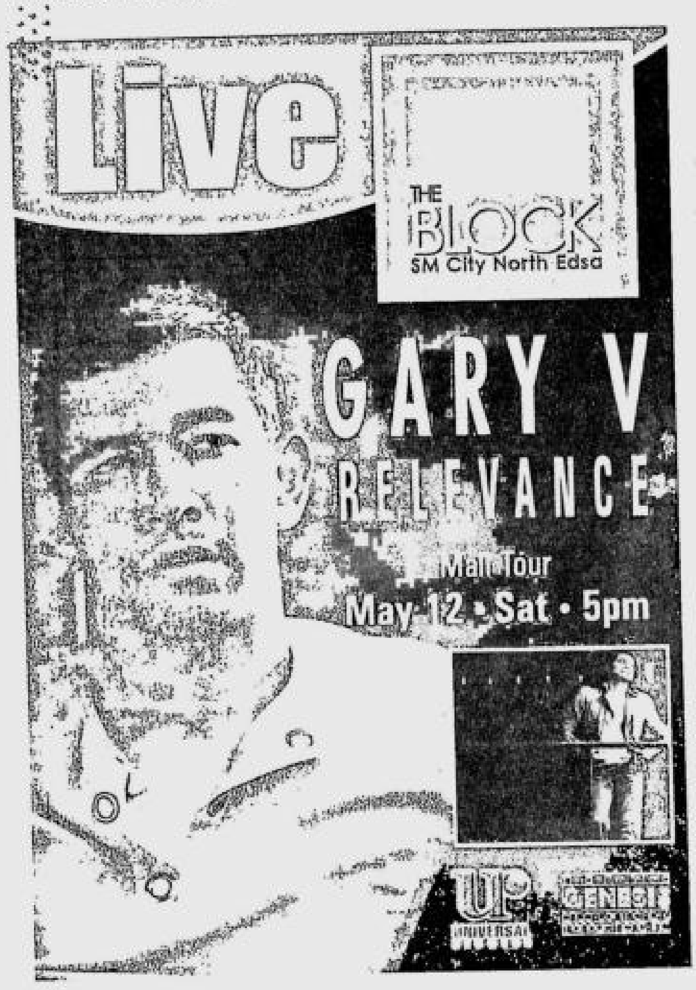
—Mama Nene Vera-Perez, the Philippine movie industry's abiding and ageless matriarch, and mother to her outstanding children—Marichu, Pepito, Gina, Bobby, Lillibeth, Chona and Kokoy. At close to 90 years of age, Mama Nene is as full of life as ever—truly an inspiration to us all!

—Boots Anson-Roa. Although she sometimes jokes about having become a mother through "immaculate conception," Boots is by no means the abstracted, pluperfect soul she's occasionally thought to be.

Burdens

Despite her responsibilities and burdens, her positive, prayerful and *happy* attitude about life sustains her, husband Pete, and their children, Leah, Joey, Chiqui and Ben. And, now that she heads Mowelfund, Boots is also the mother of all needy movie workers, and is making a difference in many lives!

Happy Mother's Day tomorrow to all moms. —And a special hug, kiss and deep gratitude to our own mother, Isabel Urbina Torre, whose own love and fortitude are God's most precious gifts to us.



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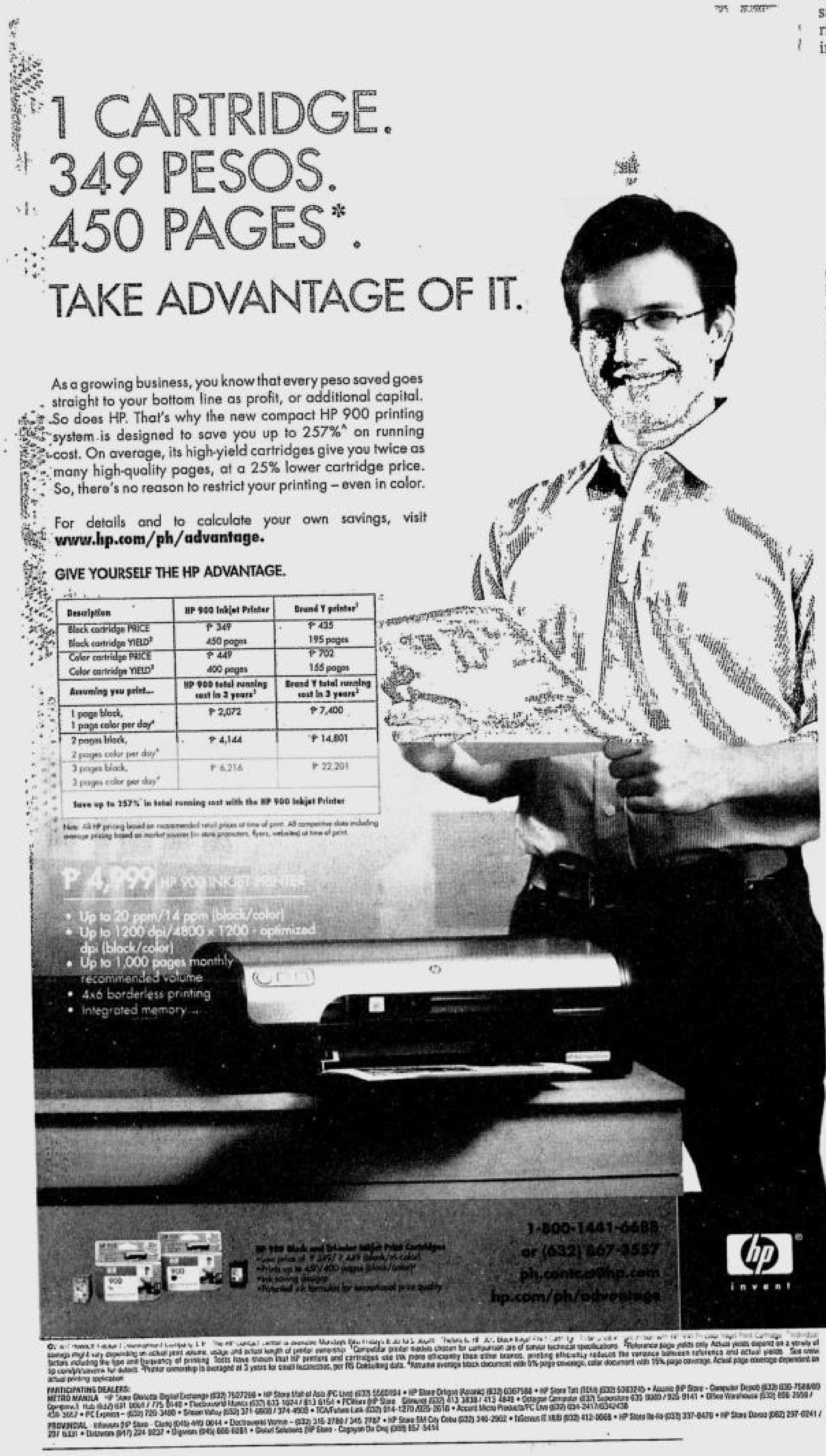

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Blu-ray is burning its high-def DVD rival

OF THE HIGH-DEFINITION DISCS BOUGHT by consumers in the first quarter, 70 percent were in the Blu-ray Disc format and 30 percent were HD DVD, according to sales figures provided by trade publication Home Media Magazine.

Blu-ray took the lead in February, and its percentage of total sales accelerated to the point where it accounted for nearly three out of every four high-definition discs sold in March.

Consumers

What's more, when given the choice, consumers are going with Blu-ray. Warner Home Video released "The Departed" the same day, Feb. 13, in both formats. Between then and March 31, consumers bought 53,640 copies of the film on Blu-ray Disc and 31,590 on HD DVD, according to Home Media's market research, based on studio estimates and Nielsen VideoScan point-of-sale data.

Research also shows that eight of the 10 top-selling high-definition titles in the first quarter were on Blu-ray Disc. At the top of the list was "Casino Royale," which sold to consumers an estimated 59,680 units in the period. The Blu-ray Disc edition of "Departed" finished second, while the HD DVD version of that Oscar-winning film placed third.

From Jan. 1 to March 31, consumers bought almost 1.2 million high-definition discs—832,530 Blu-ray units and 359,300 HD DVDs—according to Home Media Magazine. In March, consumers bought 335,980 Blu-ray Discs and 119,570 HD DVDs.

Inception

"THE DEPARTED." Was sold on both formats.

Since the high-def format's inception—HD DVD launched in April 2006, while Blu-ray got rolling two months later—more than 2.14 million discs have been purchased by consumers: 1.2 million Blu-ray Discs and about 937,500 HD DVDs.

Observers aren't surprised by the disparity, noting that Blu-ray Disc enjoys the support of five of the six major studios, while HD DVD is supported by three of them. Three studios—Sony, Disney and Fox—are exclusively in the Blu-ray camp, as is mini-major Lionsgate. Paramount and Warner support both formats. Universal is the only major studio to release titles only in the HD DVD format, which backers claim is easier and cheaper to produce.

Reuters

"CASINO ROYALE." No. 1 bestselling title on Blu-ray.

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And then there were three

By Nestor U. Torre

LAKIESHA. Eased out after some lackluster performances.

IT'S BEEN QUITE A ROLLER COASTER RIDE for the finalists in the 2007 edition of "American Idol"—perhaps the bumpiest ride in the popular singing search's history.

Some initial frontrunners have fallen by the wayside, and the heretofore unheralded Sanjaya Malakar has carved his own niche on the US show biz scene, despite his relatively lightweight talent. This is one "loser" who has his unique kind of victory written all over him.

Frontrunners

From the very start of the finals round, Lakiesha and Melinda were among the frontrunners. They were still among the final four last Wednesday, but their "invincible" lead had been whittled down considerably, and Lakiesha occasionally ended up in the lowest three in some of the tilt's rounds.

That must have been a daunting experience for the plus-size singer, who had to endure the indignity of being chided by juror Simon Cowell for "shouting" some of her songs.

Melinda had less of a bumpy ride, but she was similarly rapped for "not looking like a diva." her workaday looks and rather technical performing style made some people wonder if she had the star quality required for new singing discoveries to make it.

Blake is the only male finalist to make it to the tilt's final four—thanks to his boyish appeal and original way of making a song his own.

Why haven't more male finalists been as resilient? In general, they failed to project themselves as individual talents, blending rather than standing out—unlike last year's Taylor Hicks and Chris Daughtry who came on strong as unique and even idiosyncratic talents.

Most improved

For her part, Jordin can be said to be the 2007 tilt's most improved finalist. The 17-year-old charmer has come into her own as a versatile song stylist, except for an uncharacteristic snafu in the rock mode.

Jordin has won her share of fans because she has remained unfazed despite her being years younger than the rest of the competition. Her young age has worked to her advantage in other ways, prompting millions of teenagers and adolescents to vote for her, especially after the tilt's other teen, Sanjaya, was finally edged out.

Lakiesha, Melinda, Blake and Jordin—that's the way the survivors' circle played out last week. Then, three days ago,

AND THEN/ G2

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No third-time charm for Spidey

SPIDER-MAN shows his dark side.

By Noelani Torre

IT'S HARD to tell whether "Spider-Man 3" has run out of web or if it has spun too much of it. There are the multiple subplots, for example: Do they signify that director Sam Raimi was overflowing with ideas, or that he was grasping at straws? You could argue for either, but the result, no matter the motivation, is still more or less the same—and that end product is a bloated, fragmented movie that isn't on the same level as its predecessors.

"Spider-Man 1" was good, and "Spider-Man 2" was *very* good, thus making us hope that "Spider-man 3" would be great. After all, third time's the charm, right? Unfortunately, for us in the audience, this saying apparently doesn't apply to filmmaking.

To be fair, "Spider-Man 3" is not a terrible movie as a whole. In fact, you won't have a hard time sitting through it. You will even find yourself enjoying it, though your enjoyment will only be of a middling quality.

Perhaps it wouldn't have been so bad if it were another movie in another franchise, but this is "Spider-Man" we're talking about, and you tend to hold it to a higher standard. The trend appeared to be going upward, so our expectations went up with it.

Good things

Nonetheless, this third installment isn't completely hopeless. There are a number of good things you can say about it, and you will still feel like you got your money's worth.

First, there are the topnotch special effects (which should be expected given that the budget is rumored to be more than $300 million). Arguably the best moment in the film is when the Sandman, one of Spidey's three enemies, recovers from being accidentally particle-ized:

We see a heap of sand shifting, flowing and rising as the consciousness of the man within tries to rebuild his physical form. The struggle to reshape himself, to stand on two legs, is intense, dramatic and moving. You *don't* get many moments like this in your typical summer blockbuster.

Effective

As for the more conventional chase-and-fight sequences, they're all quite effective. The sight of Spider-Man swinging from skyscraper to skyscraper will still give you a thrill, though it seemingly lacks the exuberance of similar sequences from the franchise's second installment.

Another thing working for the film is the presence of a strong cast. Tobey Maguire, who plays the title role, imbues his character with the nerdy, everyman charm that is the comic book Spidey's trademark.

Kirsten Dunst, even when looking a bit ragged around the edges, still manages to hold her own as his beleaguered lady-love Mary Jane.

Indeed, "Spider-Man 3" has a lot of things going for it, but it's also burdened by a fragmented storyline, lack of focus, and too many bad guys. You'll end up feeling sorry for the overextended, overcommitted Spidey, and the poor actor who's playing him.

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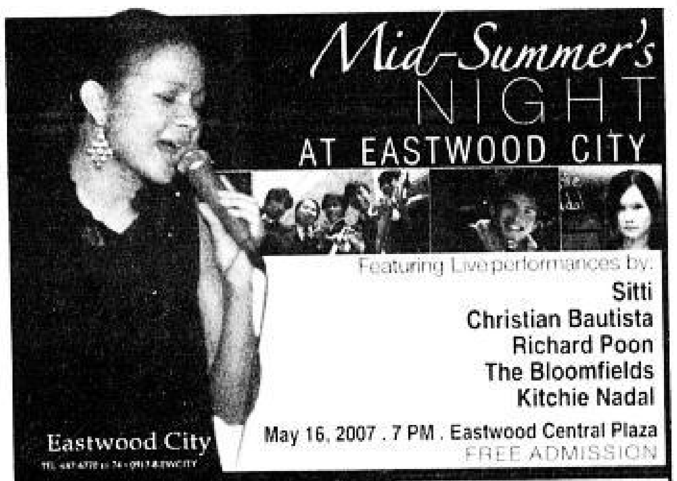

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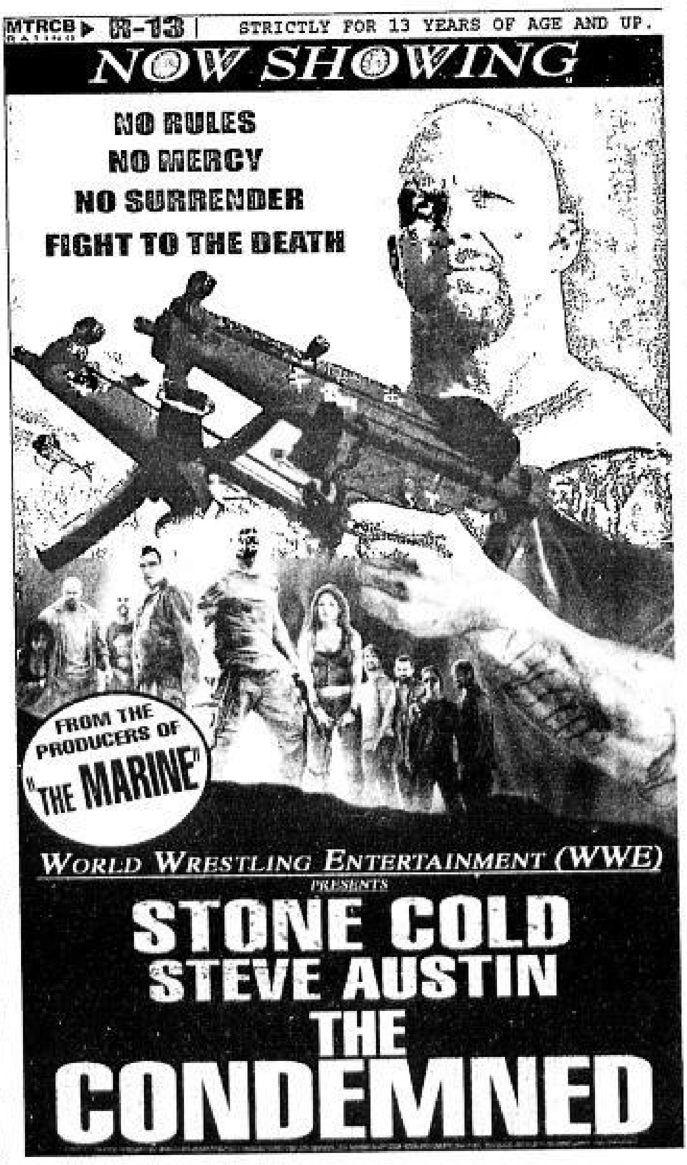

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3	28 WEEKS LATER MTRCB R-13	12:40 3:00, 5:20, 7:40, 10:00
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LUCKY YOU PG13 12:10,2:45,5:20, 7:55,10:30	THE CONDEMNED R13 12:50,3:15,5:40, 8:05,10:30	SPIDER-MAN 3 G 1:30,4:30,7:30,10:30

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And then there were three

From page G1

the Top Three were finally announced—and it was Lakiesha who was out in the cold.

The voters' verdict was a surprise because the plus-size talent has been a frontrunner since the start of the tilt's finals round. On the *other* hand, she has of late landed in the weakest three, so the warning signs have been there for all to see.

Now that the fight for the 2007 American Idol has narrowed down to a three-way contest among Jordin, Melinda and Blake, it's instructive to note that the tilt has changed its character: In the past, it was dominated by older bets, but it has now become a competition between two youths, Jordin and Blake, and the more mature Melinda. Who will edge the others out?

Consistency

On point of consistency, Melinda is the frontrunner—but 17-year-old Jordin has improved a lot since earlier days, and now looms as a drak horse in the competition. Blake has proven to be an innovative survivor, but he's made some errors in song selection.

In the final analysis, the tilt's outcome depends on its voters' main configurations. If more young people are voting, Jordin has an edge, and Blake would also benefit. If exceptional vocals and polished, mature musicality are deemed important, Melinda would be it.

As usual, however, it won't be over until the final vote is cast a couple of weeks from now, so, chances are that more surprises and unexpected developments are in store for viewers before their latest Idol is triumphantly proclaimed.

MALAKAR. Has carved his own niche.

Drama bags German Film Prize

BERLIN—A POWERful drama about an elderly piano teacher and her relationship with a young prison convict won best picture at the German Film Prize awards recently.

"Vier Minuten (Four Minutes)" took the Lola award worth $680,500, decided by more than 800 members of the German Film Academy in Berlin. It beat the pre-award favorite, "Perfume: The Story of a Murderer," which went into the evening with eight nominations, as did "Four Minutes."

Teacher

The film also picked up the best actress prize, which went to Monika Bleibtreu in the role of the teacher. Bleibtreu celebrated her birthday on the night of the awards.

"Wer Frueher Stirbt ist Laenger Tot (Grave Decisions)," a comedy about a young boy coming to terms with the death of his mother, won four awards, including best director for Marcus H. Rosenmueller.

The best actor prize went to Josef Bierbichler for "Winterreise (Winter Journey)," in which he portrays a businessman who faces bankruptcy. In order to rescue the situation, he decides to engage in a shady deal with Kenyan gangsters.

The Lolas, in their 57th year, are Germany's answer to Hollywood's Oscars. They are the most lucrative film prize in the world. *Reuters*

BLEIBTREU. Won best actress for "Four Minutes."

Good parenting

From page G4

when they reach adulthood, we should accept that they have their own choices to make and paths to follow.

3. Thou shall respect—and communicate with—children as spiritual parcels of the Supreme Lord. Their small bodies aren't reflections of their true identities. They should be given the proper information and guidance about life. Listen to them when they express their ideas and share their problems.

4. Thou shall be willing to accept sacrifices in the care of the young. The performance of pious work is guaranteed to bring a person to a higher plane of existence.

5. Thou shall nourish children. Don't poison them by exposing them to toxic food or environment.

6. Thou shall not be lazy in teaching and correcting them. We need to be firm and consistent when training young people.

7. Thou shall be a good example—in words and in deed!

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4 28 WEEKS LATER
5 LUCKY YOU
6 CONDEMNED
PREMIERE CINEMA
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3 SPIDER-MAN 3
4 SPIDER-MAN 3
5 SPIDER-MAN 3
6 SPIDER-MAN 3
7 SPIDER-MAN 3
8 SPIDER-MAN 3
9 ANG CUTE NG INA MO/ CARTOON NETWORK
10 LUCKY YOU
11 CONDEMNED
12 28 WEEKS LATER

SM MEGACINEMA 633-1901
1 SPIDER-MAN 3
2 28 WEEKS LATER
3 SPIDER-MAN 3
4 SPIDER-MAN 3
5 SPIDER-MAN 3
6 CONDEMNED
7 SPIDER-MAN 3
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9 SPIDER-MAN 3
10 SPIDER-MAN 3
11 SPIDER-MAN 3
12 THE SHOOTER/ CARTOON NETWORK

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2 SPIDER-MAN 3
3 SPIDER-MAN 3
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5 SPIDER-MAN 3
6 CONDEMNED
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8 ANG CUTE NG INA MO
9 SPIDER-MAN 3
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11 PAN'S LABYRINTH
12 WILD HOGS/ CARTOON NETWORK

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9 CONDEMNED
10 THE SHOOTER

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8 LUCKY YOU
9 ANG CUTE NG INA MO

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3 LUCKY YOU
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9 SPIDER-MAN 3
10 ANG CUTE NG INA MO
11 PAN'S LABYRINTH/ CARTOON NETWORK
12 THE SHOOTER

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2 PREMONITION
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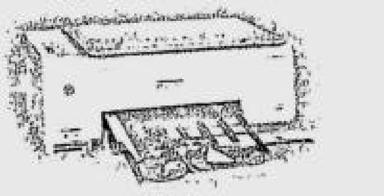

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2 SPIDER-MAN 3
3 SUNSHINE
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3 THE SHOOTER
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6 ANG CUTE NG INA MO/ CARTOON NETWORK

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2 SPIDER-MAN 3
3 PREMONITION
4 THE REAPING

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4 28 WEEKS LATER

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3 LUCKY YOU 12:00 2:30 5:00 7:30 10:00
4 THE CONDEMNED 12:00 2:30 5:00 7:30 10:00
5 28 WEEKS LATER 1:10 3:20 5:30 7:40 9:50
6 SPIDER-MAN 3 1:00 3:50 6:40 9:30
7 SPIDER-MAN 3 3:20 6:10 9:00
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4 THE CONDEMNED 12:30 2:50 5:10 7:30 10:00
5 28 WEEKS LATER 12:40 2:55 5:10 7:30 10:00
6 SPIDER-MAN 3 11:00 1:45 4:30 7:15 10:00
7 SPIDER-MAN 3 12:45 3:30 6:15 9:00

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4 28 WEEKS LATER 11:25 1:50 4:15 6:40 9:05
5 THE CONDEMNED 1:20 3:55 6:30 9:05
6 SPIDER-MAN 3 1:40 4:20 7:00
7 SPIDER-MAN 3 11:00 1:40 4:50 7:00 9:30
8 WILD HOGS 12:50 2:50 4:50 6:50 9:00

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NOW SHOWING

Zombie flick ups the horror ante

By Rito P. Asilo

"28 Weeks Later"

D: Juan Carlos Fresnadillo
S: Robert Carlyle, Catherine McCormack

JUAN CARLOS FRESNADILLO UPS THE horror ante—and the body pile—in his explosive follow-up to Danny Boyle and Alex Garland's cautionary zombie flick, 2002's "28 Days Later."

In arguably the year's most terrifying horror feature, the Goya Award-winning Spanish filmmaker of the sophisticated digital thriller, "Intacto" (2001), picks up the frenetic, blood-soaked action seven months after the Rage virus has turned most of Britain's populace into flesh-munching zombies.

The US army has apparently decimated the carnivorous rascals, and declares that the war against the "infection" has been won. London is now a veritable ghost town—the last-known infected human was exterminated six months ago—and its zonked-out survivors are confined to District One, a security settlement in the Docklands across the River Thames. The breakout has been contained, and rehabilitation is on the way. —Or, so they say.

In the film's thrilling prologue, Alice (Catherine McCormack) is seen begging for help as her scared husband, Don Harris (Robert Carlyle), leaves her for dead amidst a throng of hungry zombies. But, when siblings, Tammy (Imogen Poots) and 12-year-old Andy (Mackintosh Muggleton), accidentally find their bloodshot-around-the-eyes mother 28 weeks later, a new threat comes crashing—and chewing—into their lives!

While Alice hasn't become one of the never-say-die cannibals, it soon becomes clear that she carries in her bloodstream a dormant but highly-infectious form of the deadly virus! If no one is able to contain it, the plague just *might* spread across England's neighboring shores—like Paris, perhaps?

Yes, there's a mind-boggling excess of bone-crunching gore onscreen, but the production's gratuitous violence is diffused by the cautionary lessons it imparts. Moreover, cinematic action is further enhanced by the empathetic performances of Carlyle, McCormack, Poots, Muggleton, Rose Byrne and Jeremy Renner.

The movie boasts of fast-paced, flesh-crawling sequences that terrify. These zombies are unlike Hong Kong cinema's hopping ghosts or *Pinoy* chillers' somnolent, sleepwalking cadavers, they *really* chase after their food!

The director follows the formulaic template that made his film's predecessor a critical smash and a worldwide box-office champ in 2002, but he astutely expands the thematic context by adding the elements of invasion and "selective" sovereignty.

Fresnadillo likewise adds the all-too-human issues of grief, guilt and moral culpability that jarringly resonate in the motivations of his film's characters as they try to evade the listless living dead and the "peace-keeping" soldiers, who bombard innocent people and zombies alike with bullets, bombs and chemical weapons of mass destruction—in the guise of safeguarding the world order, natch!

CARLYLE. Empathetic performance.

Toronto programmer reaches out to local filmmakers

BAILEY. Wants to introduce the new wave of Filipino directors to American audiences.

By Rica Arevalo

THE LATEST FILM PROGRAMMER TO come to Manila is first-time visitor Cameron Bailey of the Toronto International Film Festival.

His mission: To scout for distinctive local movies to show to North American audiences. The Toronto film fest serves as one of the launching pads for the Oscars. It screens over 350 entries that range from Hollywood blockbusters to low-budget art films.

What did he find out during his six-day stay? He observes, "The most exciting discovery is the country's bustling digital cinema. It seems that Filipino filmmakers have figured out a way to make films for very little money using the newest technology and making movies that are personal. Your films have a kind of unique texture to them. They give the viewer a sense of the 'when' and 'where' while the film is being shot.

Element

"They may not be documentaries, but they have the element of naturalism—and that's remarkable to watch! It doesn't matter if moviegoers don't know anything about the Philippines, they become interested because Filipino movies bring them closer to the country and its people."

The Canadian film critic adds: "I don't see this movement happening so much in other Asian countries. Korean and Japanese filmmaking deal more with inventing worlds. In Thailand and Indonesia, you see a similar development, but on a lesser scale."

Bailey met people here who shared how uncomfortable they are with the local films that do the rounds of the film festival circuit, because a lot of them show too much poverty.

Perception

He gave them this advice: "I don't think your country should worry about the perception of a negative image. Artists will always seek out the underdogs of society. This practice reflects well on your artists, because it means they are really engaged in reflecting a segment of your country. I am glad to see that the film culture here is very supportive of filmmakers who are willing to experiment in the medium's different forms and content."

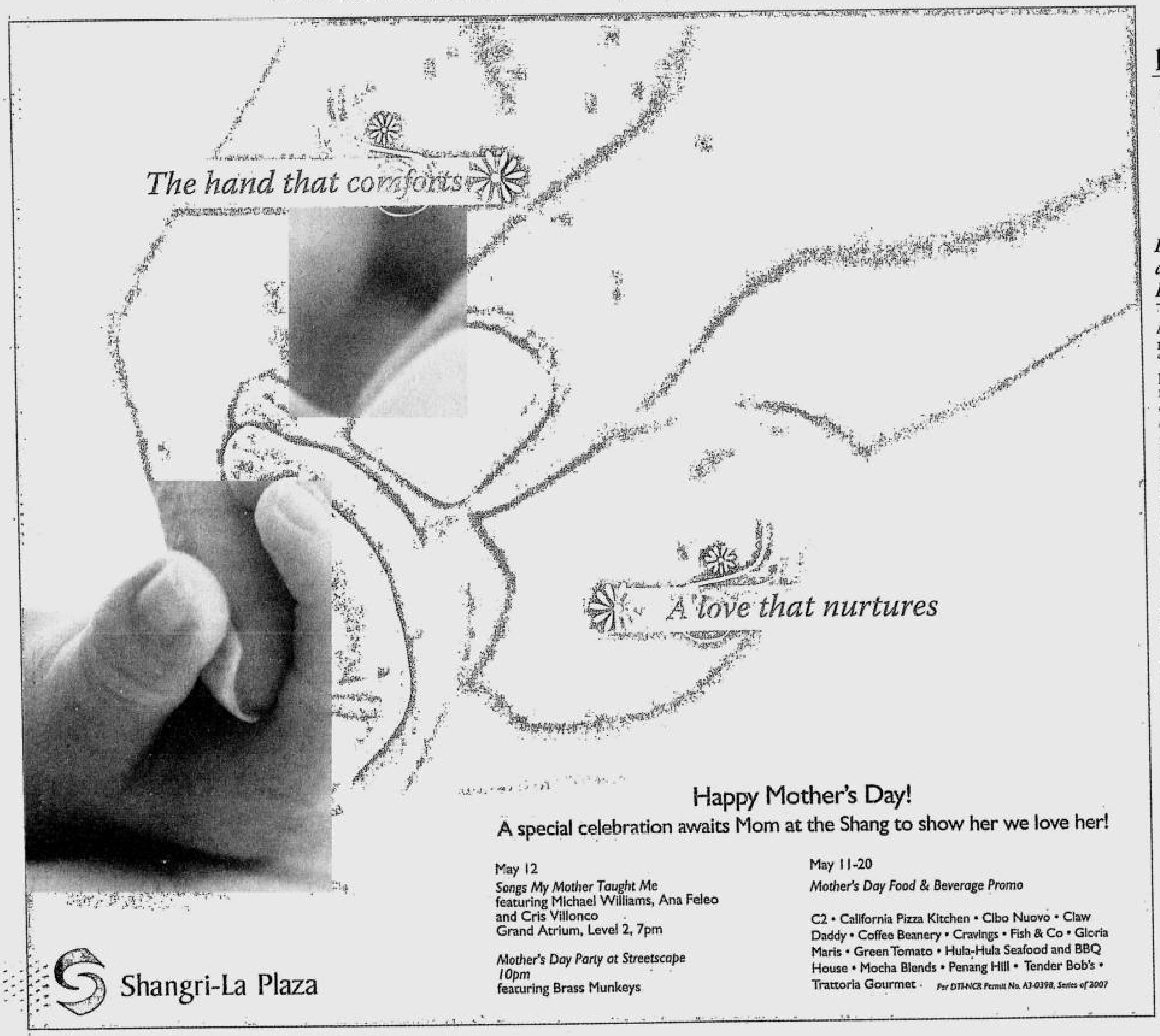
BROCKA. His films were showcased by the Canadian festival.

Why is it difficult for a Filipino film to break into the international market? His simple explanation: "Look at your cinemas this week, eight out of 10 are playing 'Spider-Man'! The same thing is happening in Canada. There's little room for anything else. Last year, 'Kubrador' played very well to audiences at the Toronto film festival. It's the sort of film that might have gotten a commercial release, but the fact is, there are perhaps 50 or 60 other very strong world cinema films from all over! Competing for the very few spots that aren't allotted to 'Spider-Man' is really tough!"

High hopes

The 43-year-old, London-born programmer has high hopes that the Philippines will again be noticed in the world. He shares: "The Toronto film fest has a long history with Philippine cinema. One of our programmers, David Overbey, spent many years studying the local industry—he knew your filmmakers very well. He introduced people like Lino Brocka and Ishmael Bernal to audiences in North America.

"We're picking up from that past relationship to introduce the new generation of Filipino filmmakers to North American audiences again!"



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Shangri-La Plaza

Good parenting

LOTUS POND

R. Valencia and S. Bismark

A CONCERNED mother once asked, "How can I be a good parent? I don't know much about raising children, because my own parents left me mostly on my own. I don't know anything about discipline. Now, I have children of my own, and I don't know how to deal with them!"

Responsibilities

It is said that a parent who fulfills her responsibilities is blessed. Here are guidelines:

1. Thou shall bear children to love and nurture. Children should never be seen as unwanted burdens or accidental offshoots of the sexual act. They are natural products of sexual activity and, therefore, must be cared for. They are beloved sparks of the Supreme Being. To find fulfillment, we must show them love.

2. Thou shall not treat children as future investments. Real love is unconditional—it should not contain terms and conditions. We should train our children well, but

GOOD/ G3

SATURDAY Special

DANES AND COX. Topbill the fairy tale, "Stardust."

Sleepers lurk below summer blockbusters

SEQUELS TO "SHREK," "SPIDER-MAN" AND "Pirates of the Caribbean" aren't the only movies coming out this summer. It only seems that way. Beneath the Hollywood's behemoth franchise flicks, a few less-heralded gems sneak in to become niche hits and sometimes $100-million smashes.

The question is whether this season's exceptionally strong lineup of blockbuster sequels will leave breathing room for many or any summer sleepers.

"There's not a single movie I don't know about this summer, and I'm terrified of them all," said director Matthew Vaughn, who worries his intriguing fantasy, "Stardust," could get lost amid the rush that began this month with "Spider-Man 3," "Shrek the Third," and "Pirates of the Caribbean: At World's End." "I call them juggernauts. They are coming—and nothing's going to stop them!"

A fairy tale for adults, "Stardust" features Claire Danes as the human incarnation of a fallen star, who lands on Earth, falls for a young adventurer (Charlie Cox), is befriended by an effeminate ship captain (Robert De Niro) and pursued by an evil witch (Michelle Pfeiffer).

"HARRY POTTER AND THE ORDER OF THE PHOENIX." Popular children's fantasy-adventure makes its fifth bid at the box office.

Sequel

"Stardust" opens in August on the same day as the buddy-cop sequel, "Rush Hour 3," and just weeks after such big flicks as "Harry Potter and the Order of the Phoenix," "The Simpsons Movie" and "The Bourne Ultimatum."

Along with those big hitters, summer's lineup features such heavily marketed studio flicks as the animated tales "Ratatouille" and "Surf's Up," the sci-fi saga, "Transformers," and sequels including the heist caper, "Ocean's Thirteen," the superhero adventure, "Fantastic Four: Rise of the Silver Surfer," and the comedy, "Evan Almighty."

How are worthy smaller movies supposed to stand out in a crowd like that?

"That's none of my business. I'm a filmmaker, not a marketer," said Frank Oz, who has made such studio films as "The Stepford Wives" remake and "The Score," but this time

SLEEPERS/ H2

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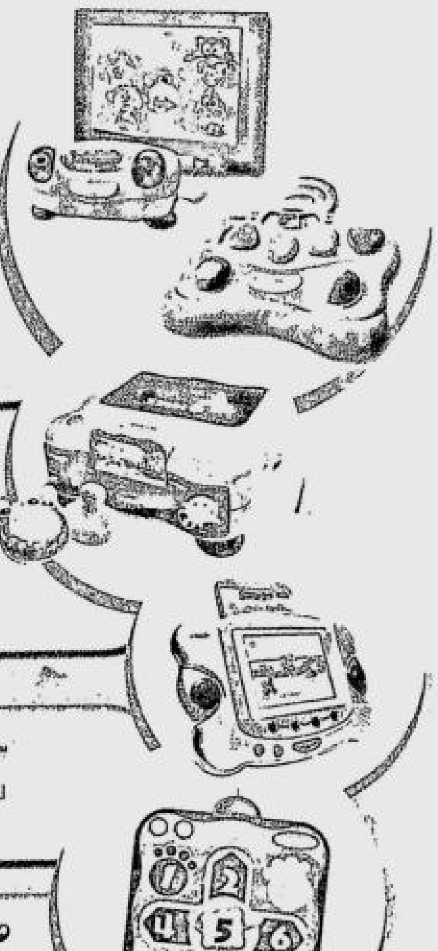

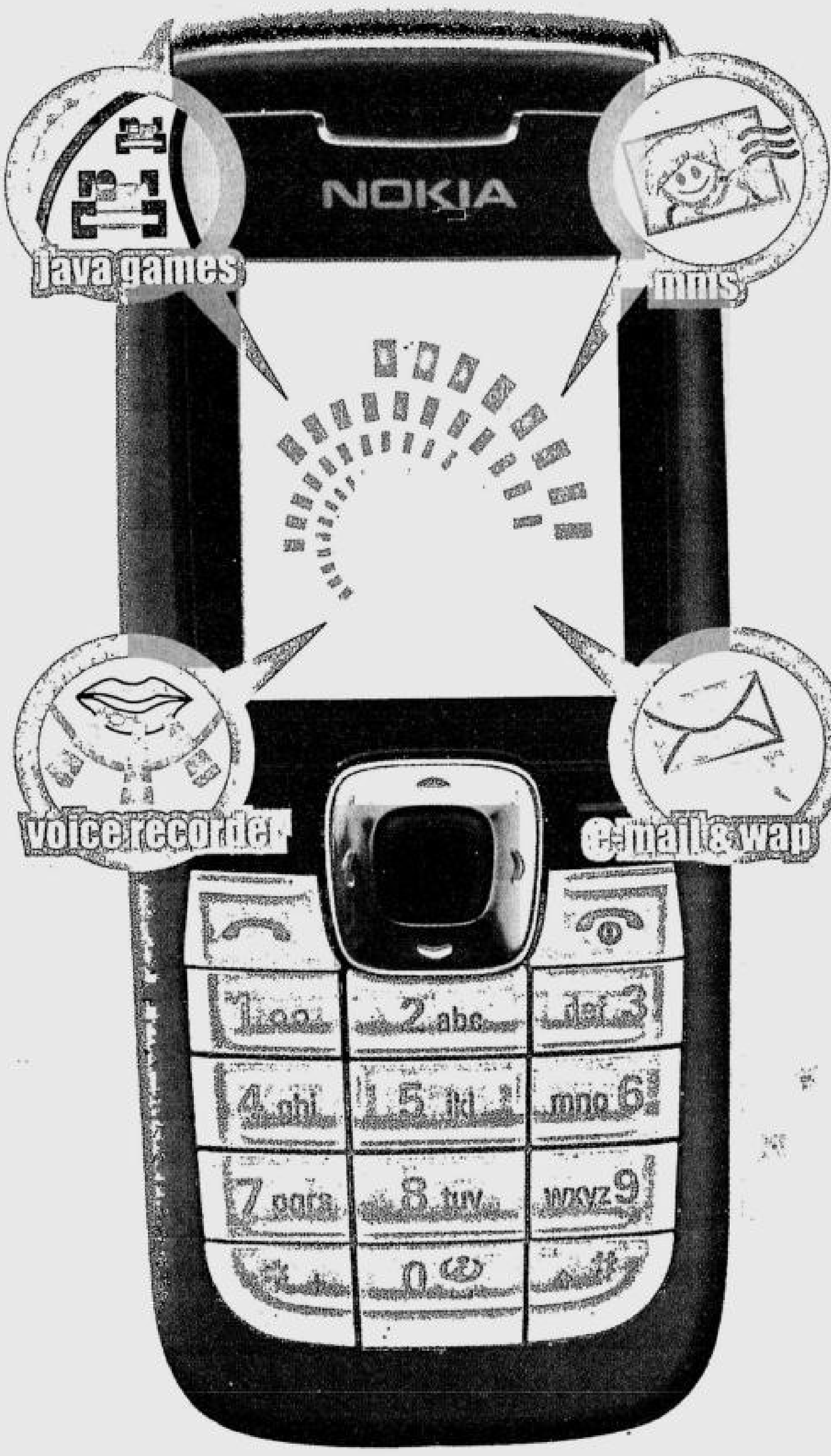

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Genre-reinventing risktaking pays off for Michael Bublé

By Rito P. Asilo

MICHAEL BUBLÉ'S APTITUDE FOR reinventing standards and turning them into pop staples is again on full display in his latest must-have album, "Call Me Irresponsible," the follow-up to his superb 2003 big-studio effort, "It's Time."

This time around, the 31-year-old Canadian crooner takes bigger musical risks by reworking well-loved tunes from other genres like Eric Clapton's soft-rock classic, "Wonderful Tonight," which he successfully turns into a soothing bossa nova duet with Ivan Lins.

Expertise

In "Coming Home Baby," he takes advantage of the vocal expertise of the talented guys from Boys II Men, who provide backing vocals on Bublé's cover of the rousing '60s standard. The infectiously playful number will remind listeners of the energy and vocal pizzazz of James Brown and Buddy Holly.

He also experiments with the Latin sound in his naughtily arranged remake of Mancini and Mercer's "It Had Better Be Tonight (Meglio Stasera)." Another sexy, vocally-savvy number is "Me and Mrs. Jones."

Even more surprisingly, Bublé reworks Willie Nelson's oft-recorded "Always on My Mind" and comes up with a moving rendition. He uses his voice to evoke its lyrics' loneliness and pathos—and delivers a winner. In Gordon and Thompson's gospel-tinged "That's Life," his voice glides smoothly with the choral background until he releases his impressive guttural chest tones for the finale.

BUBLÉ. Aptitude for reviving standards.

Pleasant additions

If you love the masculine crooning ways that have initially served notice of Bublé as an upcoming singer, his smooth version of Mercer's "Dream," and the radio-friendly "Lost," which he co-wrote, are pleasant additions to his popular ballads.

The big-band sound is represented by the snappy "The Best is Yet to Come," "Call Me Irresponsible," and Frank Sinatra's "L.O.V.E.," a bonus track included in the record's Asian package.

Our top pick, however, is another song he co-wrote, "Everything," which is slowly inching its way up the pop charts. The original song brings out Bublé's clear pop sound and ranks up there with his renditions of "Sway," "Home," "You and I," "I've Got You Under My Skin," "Fever" and—surprise—the theme from "Spider-Man"!

Rememb Kubrick'

By Nestor U. Torre

WHAT'S THE BEST SCIENCE-fiction film of all time? The editors of Entertainment Weekly have spoken: It's "The Matrix."

The film starring Keanu Reeves and Laurence Fishbourne is cited for "reinventing" the sci-fi format with the dexterous use of new technology that enabled it, not just to freeze combatants in mid-air, but also to swivel them around in the process, resulting in a new way of seeing that lives up to the highest traditions of true science fiction.

Thematic contributions

While we admire "The Matrix" for its many visual and thematic contributions, we believe that the best sci-fi movie is "2001: A Space Odyssey." Stanley Kubrick's 1968 space epic is described by cineastes as a unique masterpiece that's been immensely influential, providing the seminal inspiration for other outstanding movies like "E.T." and "Star Wars."

In the film, Kubrick depicts a number of encounters mankind has had with unseen aliens since the dawn of Man's antecedents two million years ago, up to the year when an alien artifact is found on the moon.

An expedition tracking its signal is launched and heads for Jupiter, with mysterious, haunting results. We can still remember how, along with the mission's crew, we got goosebumps when they first encountered an advanced alien civilization that finally made itself known to mankind by triumphantly emerging from a huge

Sleepers lurk...

From page H1

directs the small ensemble comedy "Death at a Funeral," which opens right before the busy Fourth of July weekend, when "Ratatouille" and "Transformers" are expected to dominate at theaters.

"My job is to make a film, not to look at grosses and marketing. I've been told what films are up against mine, and I've forgotten them all," said Oz, whose film features a relatively unknown cast in the tale of a British funeral beset by outrageous revelations, schemes and mishaps.

Strategy

The strategy for such smaller films is to screen them for critics and preview audiences well in advance, so word-of-mouth can help make up for their generally minimal marketing budgets.

The film-festival circuit is a major pipeline to build buzz for sleeper films, including such past summer hits as "Little Miss Sunshine," "Garden State" and "Napoleon Dynamite."

Teen tale

Favorites from last fall's Toronto and this winter's Sundance festivals are hitting theaters this summer, among them the teen tale "Rocket Science," about a stuttering youth who tries out for a debate team; "Away From Her," a melancholy drama directed by actress Sarah Polley about a woman (Julie Christie) succumbing to Alzheimer's; "Waitress," with Keri Russell as a diner worker trying to break away from her dreary life; "Once," following an Irish street musician (Glen Hansard of the Frames) who forms a musical partnership with a Czech woman; and "Eagle vs. Shark," a quirky New Zealand romance between a wallflower and a geek.

Attention

Some summer films vying for attention among the franchise flicks benefit from big-name performers, such as last year's breakout hits "The Devil Wears Prada" with Meryl Streep and "The Break-Up" with Jennifer Aniston.

Those two films also filled the chick-flick void typical of summer, which tends toward action spectacles, teen comedies and family movies.

Comedy

Among this season's films with female star power are the comedy "Knocked Up," featuring Katherine Heigl of "Grey's Anatomy" as a career-minded woman who gets pregnant from a drunken one-night stand with a slacker (Seth Rogen), and the romantic drama "No Reservations," starring Catherine Zeta-Jones as a work-obsessed chef whose poor interpersonal skills are tested by her young niece (Abigail Breslin) and an easygoing sous chef (Aaron Eckhart).

Remake

"It's certainly not a `Spider-Man' or a 'Batman,'" Zeta-Jones said of "No Reservations," a remake of the 2002 German charmer "Mostly Martha." "I really love the movie, but it's out of my control, the way it's programmed and marketed ... I just thought that it's a story that could be brought to a broader audience."

Busy summer

"No Reservations" director Scott Hicks said he was happy distributor Warner Bros. had enough confidence in the film to put it out in the busy summer rather than waiting for fall, when most films aimed at older adults hit theaters.

"We hope to sort of weave our way through the behemoths as they come thundering down the tracks," Hicks said. "It will provide some counter-programming for the big summer fare. Beyond that, it's in the hands of the audience gods now."

Along with Heigl's appeal, "Knocked Up" benefits from the track record of writer-director Judd Apatow, who scored a big-screen smash with "The 40-Year-Old Virgin," which co-starred Rogen, now elevated to leading man.

Not surprising

"We talked about making a movie where I was the lead, but no one was going to let us, which is not surprising," said Rogen, who also co-starred in Apatow's beloved TV shows "Freaks and Geeks" and "Undeclared." "If you look at me, there's nothing that screams, `I want to stare at this for two hours.'" *AP*

Timeless movie themes enhance the spirit of film classics

By Behn Cervantes

EARLY ON, HOLLYWOOD REALIZED the value of music to underscore the theme and action of movies. After all, before sound and recorded music became part and parcel of the cinematic art form, only live piano music accompanied the action on the screen.

With technology came the use of color and realistic movement. Thus, music in films reflected the progress in motion picture technology. It helped capture the feel and nuances of the story, and it became a vital component of the art form. In fact, certain movies live on because of their unforgettable theme songs!

High on the list of the moviegoing public's favorite films is the 1940 classic, "Gone With the Wind." It was epic in theme, scope and achievement. No other film had such an unprecedented critical and popular reception.

Regional flavor

Naturally, David Selznick's opus required music to equal its breadth. The movie's theme song, "Tara's Theme"—also known as "My Own True Love"—has romantic poignancy, immediacy, nostalgia, and regional flavor. When you hear it, you remember the film's unforgettable scenes:

You recall the fiery and luminous Vivien Leigh as the haughty and flirtatious Scarlet O'Hara sharing scenes with Clark Gable, Olivia de Havilland and Leslie Howard. The song remains a classic to this day.

"An Affair to Remember" is another memorable movie theme song. When Vic Damone sings it in his distinctive lyric-baritone voice, we see the suave Cary Grant enamored with Deborah Kerr again. We envision the disappointed Grant on top of the Empire State Building—then the highest building in world! The song was not just romantic, it was also soaring and ethereal.

Fusion

Jennifer Jones, playing Eurasian Han Suyin, fell in love with American journalist William Holden in "Love Is A Many Splendored Thing." Therefore, their intercontinental love affair needed a fusion of Eastern and Western music.

"To Each His Own" likewise focused on cultural differences. De Havilland portrayed an Eastern European migrant nurse working out her relationship with an ambitious American (Robert Mitchum).

The movie theme captured the inner pain of the woman, and the two-time Oscar-winning actress knew exactly how to squeeze the moviegoer's heart! The film's haunting music aided and abetted our sympathy and emotional involvement.

Memory

"Chariots of Fire," "Goldfinger," "Cabaret," "Sound of Music" and "White Christmas" are other good films also remembered for their theme songs. As soon as they're mentioned, their theme songs are instantly replayed in our memory—in stereophonic sound!

Films, after all, are intended to be an audio-visual treat for moviegoers. What better way to remember them than through their evocative and distinctive music?

"AN AFFAIR to Remember" (above), "Love is a Many-Splendored Thing," (right) and "To Each His Own" (far right): They were enhanced by memorable songs.

ering
s sci-fi classic

starship that made the Earth's own space probes look like mosquitoes in the presence of a noble metallic eagle.

Astral travel

Also memorable was the film's long "psychedelic high" sequence, during which spacemen first experienced astral travel. The sequence is truly a visual feast of heady, abstract images that seemingly invite the viewer to look into his own heart, mind and soul, to find illuminating new resonances therein.

Finally, we celebrate "2001" because it is one of the few sci-fi movies that present aliens who aren't bent on controlling or destroying our planet and the human race.

This tactic is resorted to by many other sci-fi films because it adds conflict and terror to their storytelling, but it shouldn't be encouraged because it perpetuates man's primitive fear of the unknown and of creatures that are "different" from us.

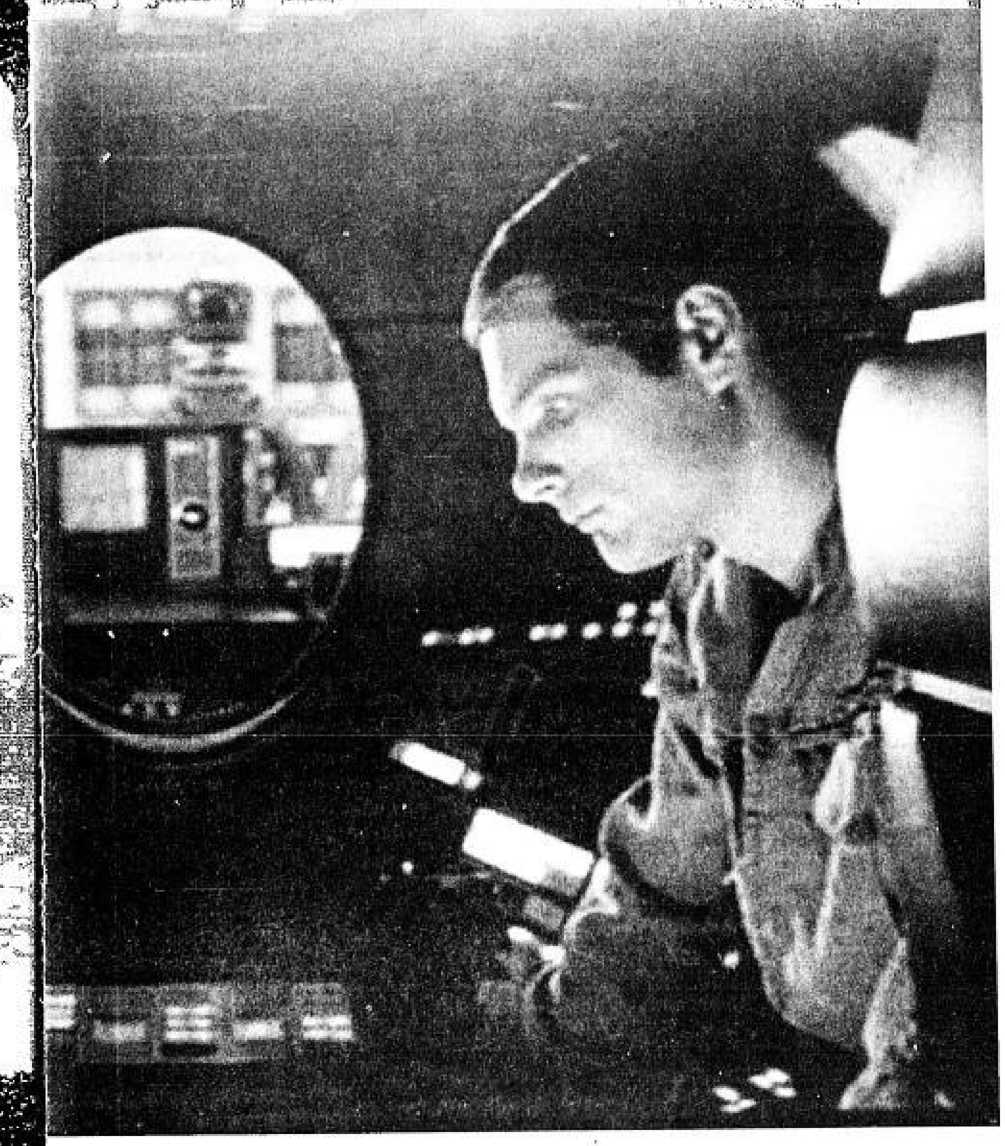
More enlightened

Kubrick's more enlightened production is admirable because it rejects such a constricting mind set. His film's aliens come from a vastly advanced civilization that wants to help mankind come into its own in the universe.

That tack is much more believable because it's logical that, being advanced, the alien race has moved far beyond petty motives and feelings, and its psychology has become as brilliantly enlightened as its technology.

Other outstanding sci-fi films include "Aliens," "E.T." "Blade Runner," "Star Wars," "The Thing," and "Them."

KEIR Dullea (right) starred in the ace filmmaker's 1968 masterpiece.



'Today' expands Matt Lauer's role

MATT LAUER WAS SENT PACKING last week on another one of those round-the-world mystery jaunts for "Today," the kind that has probably earned him enough frequent flier miles to get to the moon for free.

Some of his work during the past few weeks on stories closer to home better illustrate his value to NBC News.

In the midst of Don Imus' career implosion over his remark about the Rutgers women's basketball team, Lauer so adroitly handled an on-camera interview with his own boss at NBC News that it impressed a former competitor watching at home.

Partner

With his news organization again in the news a week later, Lauer and partner Meredith Vieira bluntly discussed NBC's role in disseminating pictures sent by Virginia Tech gunman Seung-Hui Cho and the reaction against that decision.

The departures of Katie Couric and Charles Gibson for evening anchor jobs last year left Lauer as the king of morning television. Although the transition to a new "Today" hasn't been flawless, Lauer has assumed his role with quiet authority and skill. No one really comes close.

The Imus controversy was the nation's biggest story for a week and it directly involved NBC News because MSNBC simulcast the radio star's show. Lauer spoke to Imus and his chief critic, the Rev. Al Sharpton, together on the April 10 show, and for most TV hosts, merely preventing a shouting match would have been an achievement. Lauer kept in firm control and got pointed questions in to both men.

Comments

To Imus, who still had his job at that point, he asked: "If you didn't immediately understand how deplorable the comments were of last week, how can you be trusted to clean up your own act or censor yourself down the road in the future?"

He asked Sharpton, a minister, how the Biblical concept of forgiveness applied to Imus. "Can he only be forgiven," he said, "if he's unemployed?"

Two days later, he interviewed NBC News President Steve Capus about the decision to end the MSNBC simulcast. There was no friendly banter. Lauer pressed Capus about the timing of the firing, staying on him when the question was ducked. He forced Capus to respond to the idea that NBC was caving to pressure from advertisers and some of the loudest voices. *AP*

LAUER. No one really comes close.

Thriller genre in state of rigor mortis

THE THRILL IS GONE. IN RECENT weeks, Hollywood has rolled out a succession of thrillers, but with the exception of "Disturbia"—a sort of teen spirit riff on "Rear Window"—audiences clearly haven't been on the edge of their seats.

Sony Pictures' release of Revolution Studios' "Perfect Stranger"—though it had all the appointments of a sleek-looking thriller and potential star power in Halle Berry and Bruce Willis—opened in fourth place with a disappointing $11.2 million, dropped to ninth in its second weekend and has grossed only $18.7 million domestically.

Battle of wits

New Line Cinema's legal thriller "Fracture," starring Anthony Hopkins and Ryan Gosling in a battle of wits, walked away with better reviews and opened at No. 2 but still took in only $11 million in its first weekend.

Paramount Pictures' "Zodiac" might have been more of an atmospheric procedural about the search for San Francisco's Zodiac serial killer, but it was sold as a thriller and has picked up only $32.9 million after eight weeks. MGM's release of the Weinstein Co.'s "Hannibal Rising" in February drew even less blood, grossing only $27.6 million.

The thriller, of course, is an elastic genre, embracing all sorts of combinations of shadowy suspense, violin-shrieking jeopardy and tricky plotting. BoxofficeMojo.com, in its accounting of the box office performance by genre, helpfully divides thrillers into various flavors: erotic, serial killer and political.

Handful of hits

What's illustrative is that, a handful of hits aside, thrillers don't usually result in breakout movies. Looking at movies released since 1980, the site identifies only two erotic thrillers that broke the $100 million mark: 1987's "Fatal Attraction" ($156.6 million) and 1992's "Basic Instinct" ($117.7 million.) In the serial killer category, three of the top five movies, beginning with 2001's "Hannibal" ($165.1 million), featured Hannibal Lecter. As for political thrillers, they're a hardier bunch: Eight have topped the $100 million mark, including three movies based on books by Tom Clancy and one, "The Pelican Brief," an adaptation of a John Grisham novel.

Formula

Instead, most thrillers, even when they've connected with audiences, have served as solid, midrange performers. Paramount mined that vein in the '90s with the Ashley Judd vehicle "Kiss the Girls" ($60.5 million), then hit gold in 1999 with the actress' "Double Jeopardy" ($116.7 million) only to see the formula collapse with 2004's "Twisted" ($25.2 million.) In fact, when "Perfect Stranger" stiffed, one distributor suggested the film simply looked too much like those old Paramount thrillers that had run their course. *Reuters*

Holloway makes big-screen splash in 'Whisper'

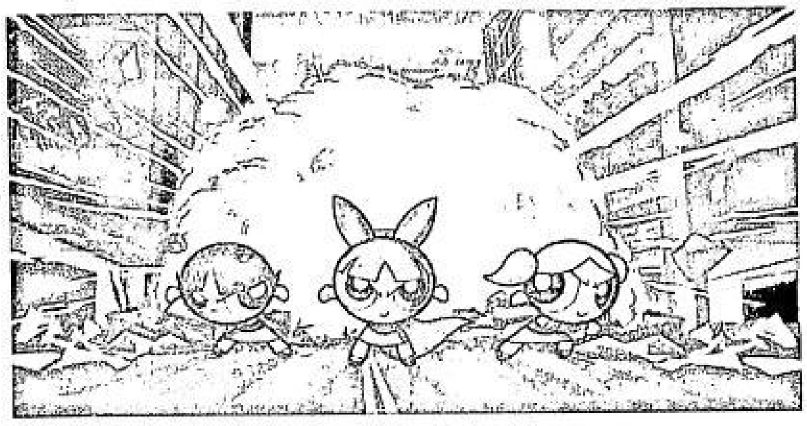
ATKINSON. Mr. Bean's spectacular talent for mayhem is on full display again.

IN THE COMPELLING SUPERNATURAL thriller, "Whisper," the act of kidnapping a young boy could have fatal consequences. Max discovers this when he kidnaps the son of a very wealthy woman and takes him to an abandoned summer camp.

As they await ransom instructions, the kidnappers begin to turn against each other, as past betrayals and secrets inexplicably come into play. When the escalating events turn creepily horrific, it becomes apparent that the child may not be the helpless, innocent victim he first appeared to be.

To make "Whisper" a truly gripping and empathetic viewing experience, producer Paul Brooks took great pains to cast the best actors in the movie's principal roles. For Max, he decided on Josh Holloway, star of the Emmy and Golden Globe Award-winning hit TV series, "Lost." This is regarded as a casting coup, because Holloway is regarded by some Hollywood observers as a hot prospect for film stardom.

The role of the "devil boy" proved to be much tougher to cast. the film's makers had to audition hundred of child actors before settling on Blake Woodruff, who "nailed" his audition because he was able to show his young character's mystifying and scary duality.



"POWERPUFF GIRLS." Will be screened on Mother's Day.

MONTAGE

Lani on 'MYX Live'

Catch Lani Misalucha on "MYX Live" at 8 p.m. today and 10 a.m. tomorrow. She will perform songs from her self-titled album.

At the Park

"Concert at the Park" at 6 p.m. tomorrow features piano contest winners Ma. Regina Montesclaros, Feoderis Gumarang, Joshua Daniel del Mundo, and France Lorenzo Liwanag, among others.

Benefit dinner

Ma-Yi, the acclaimed Filipino-American theater company based in New York City, recently held a benefit dinner to raise funds for its projects. During the event, David Henry Hwang was cited for excellence in the field of art, and Loida Nicolas Lewis was given the excellence in community outreach award.

He's back!

Rowan Atkinson returns to the iconic role that made him an international star—his latest misadventure is "Mr. Bean's Holiday." Winning a vacation trip to France, the world-class bumbler and bungler proceeds to wreck the trip for everyone he meets! The film also stars Willem Dafoe as Carlson Clay, a self-absorbed actor-director whose hopes for glory at the Cannes film fest are foiled by his spectacular lack of talent—and Mr. Bean's similarly spectacular talent for mayhem!

Cartoon Network

Cartoon Network fans can catch their favorite shows at SM Cinemas. During sneak peek weekends until July, viewing treats include "The Powerpuff Girls," "Dexter's Laboratory" and "Codename: Kids Next Door."

On Mother's Day weekend, May 12-13, Cartoon Network Theater screens "The Powerpuff Girls Mother's Day Special." Coming attractions include "Dexter's Laboratory" and "Codename: Kids Next Door" in "Operation Z.E.R.O."

Chad Peralta

"Pinoy Dream Academy's" Chad Peralta has released his self-titled debut album, which features eight original songs, two remakes and an acoustic version of the carrier single, "A Song for You."

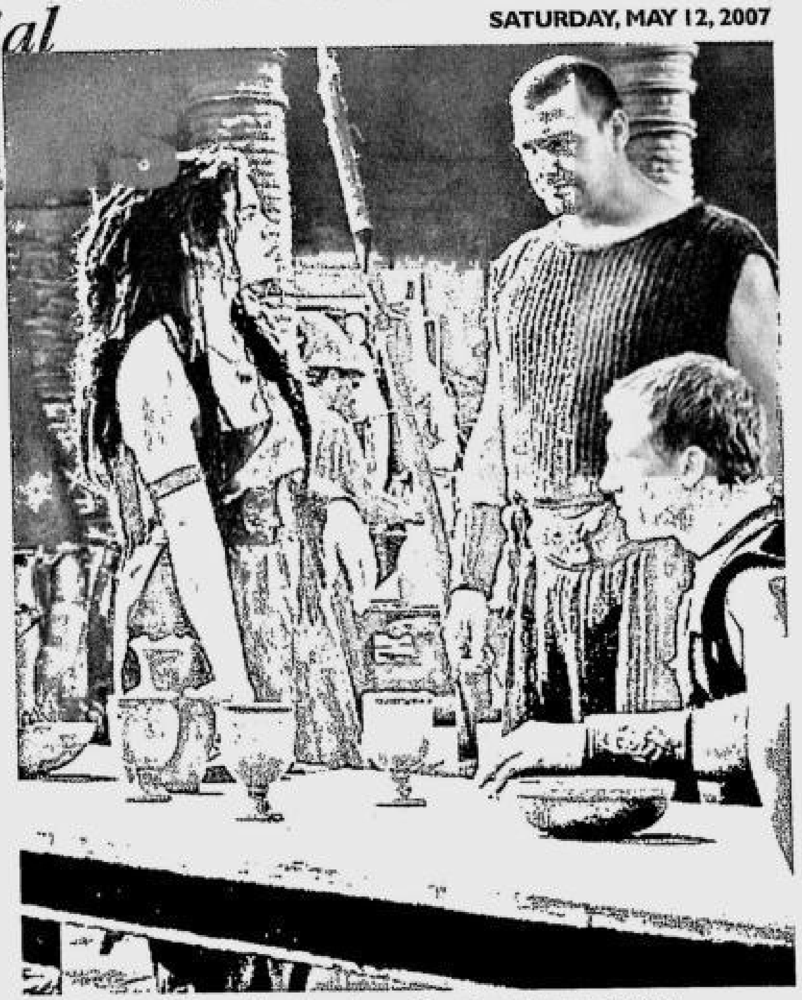
Movies on TV

On HBO, May 12 at 6 a.m., "Young Sherlock Holmes." May 13 at 12:15 p.m., "Rome 13." 7 p.m., "The Terminal." May 14 at 11 p.m., "Rome 14." 11:55 p.m., "ED TV." May 15 at 6 a.m., "In the Name of the Father." May 16 at 8 a.m., "The Life and Death of Peter Sellers." May 18 at 8:30 a.m., "Tim Burton's The Corpse Bride." 12:55 a.m., "Rome 14."

On Cinemax, May 12 at 12:50 p.m., "Dog Day Afternoon." May 13 at 6 a.m., "Street Corner Justice." May 14 at 11 p.m., "Apollo 13." May 15 at 7 p.m., "Single White Female 2." May 16 at 6 a.m., "Rio Bravo." May 17 at 9:45 a.m., "The Two Jakes." May 18 at 8:10 a.m., "The 7th Voyage of Sinbad."

HOLLOWAY. Topbills supernatural thriller.

They stride like Tita



SEASON Two of "Rome" is telecast every Monday at 11 p.m. on HBO.

MEET THE LARGER-THAN-LIFE characters who stride like Titans through the current final season of HBO's mega-series, "Rome" (telecast Mondays at 11 p.m.):.

Lucius Vorenus

(played by Kevin McKidd)

Honorable and severe, Vorenus is unforgiving and pitiless when crossed. Also a dour and pragmatic man, he has a tendency towards self-laceration.

Season One saw Vorenus as the embodiment of the steadfast Roman soldier; a cool, savvy and determined officer who did his duty no matter what.

A fiercely loyal bodyguard to the late Caesar, Vorenus is a shadow of his former self in this season of "Rome." He descends into near-madness over his failure to protect Caesar, his role in his wife's death, and the rumored death of his estranged daughters.

Titus Pullo

(played by Ray Stevenson)

A ferocious lover of life, possessing the courage and loyalty of a warrior but the morality of a pirate, Pullo is also a man of huge appetites and wild passions.

In Season One, Pullo was a creature of impulse—a fearless, impulsive, conceited, and hot-blooded warrior who was prone to all sorts of trouble.

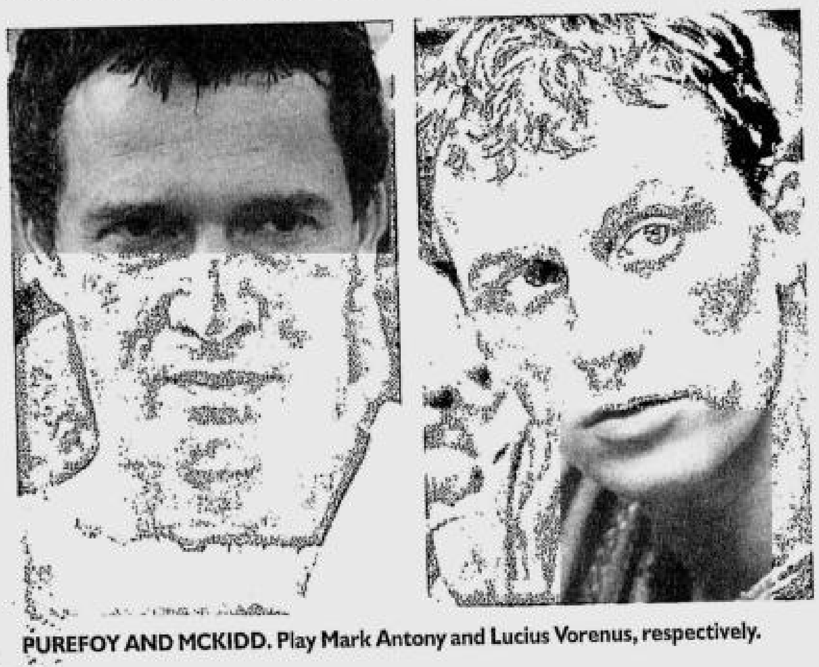
However, in Season Two, Pullo faces a new set of challenges as he becomes domesticated. Married to the former slave girl, Eirene, he looks at the prospect of leaving behind the brutal world of the warrior for a more peaceful, traditional existence with the woman he loves.

Atia of the Julii

(played by Polly Walker)

Atia finds her world in chaos following the assassination of her uncle, Caesar. With him gone, she feels much more vulnerable and has more self-doubt. In her more reflective moments, you can see the woman behind the façade. But, of course, she has her many resources, including her wits.

Atia takes on a more aggressively political role in Season Two, torn between Mark Antony and her son, Octavian. Atia hates her son now as she can no longer control him like she used to. However, she is aware that it was she who helped created this monster in Octavian.



PUREFOY AND MCKIDD. Play Mark Antony and Lucius Vorenus, respectively.

Mark Antony

(played by James Purefoy)

Immensely brave, handsome and dashing, Mark Antony is loved by his men and adored by women. Arrogant and impulsive, he is impatient with political niceties beyond rousing a mob or charging full tilt at an enemy. Antony was also Caesar's most trusted ally.

He comes out from Caesar's shadow a great deal in this second season. An amazingly colorful figure, Antony is very aggressive and certain of himself, and he believes in his men. The reason he was so popular with his men is that he was willing to get his hands dirty along with them.

Servilia of the Junii

(played by Lindsay Duncan)

The mother of Brutus, erstwhile lover of Caesar and the driving force behind his assassination, the proud and scheming Servilia is a staunchy republican aristocrat. She is a sophisticated political operator, very aware of her status in the republic, and determined to further the cause of her family.

Servilia hates Atia for destroying her relationship with Caesar. Plotting his murder was an act of revenge for his ending their affair so brutally. So, to get rid of him and become the ruling family of Rome would suit her very well.

Octavia of the Julii

(played by Kerry Condon)

A pawn between the struggle between her mother, Atia, and her lover, Servilia, in Season One, the beautiful but weak-willed sister of Octavian undertakes marriage and motherhood this season.

Her relationship with her brother deteriorates as he changes, and she finds herself getting closer to Atia, her mother. Despite frequent clashes with the latter, Octavia never stopped longing for her mother's approval.

On the road with Sharon

CUNETA. Warm and sincere.

By Rito P. Asilo

WHEN WE WERE USHERED into the presidential suite of Ilocos' posh Fort Ilocandia to have breakfast with Sharon Cuneta early this week, we found the experience surreal: The megastar said she could hardly open her eyes due to lack of sleep, but she was radiant and warm just the same. When she woke up, she had 77 unread messages on her Blackberry—and she didn't know which ones to answer first!

Senator Francis "Kiko" Pangilinan was elsewhere in the room answering a phone-patch radio interview, while their precocious daughters, Frankie and Miel, played happily nearby. Sorely missed was KC, who was in France for her final year in school. Before Kiko left to tend to radio and TV reporters, we lobbied for more tangible government support for the arts (the youthful senator was one of the principal authors of the anti-piracy bill).

Impeccable manners

At one point, Sharon subtly and lovingly reminded Frankie about the importance of saying "excuse me" when the lovely tyke—who looked cuter without her two front teeth—wanted to catch her mom's attention. It's no wonder why her children have such impeccable manners! And, mind you, these kids speak Tagalog very well!

Obviously, Sharon, now slimmer than when we last met her in February, is used to multitasking: As she vigorously texted answers to the more urgent messages, she showed us her interview with Deborah Kan, which was aired on May 4 on Star World. (Two weeks earlier, Gore Vidal was on Kan's hot seat). While Sharon was picking at her pancake, her makeup artist was hovering about, prepping her for a press briefing before lunch.

We hate election sorties, because we also grew up in an overtly political environment (our dear father was a provincial board member in Davao del Sur for two terms and served longer in the municipal government prior to that). Sharon has always said how she would do away with politics if only she could. She confessed how she'd sometimes lose her cool when, at campaign sorties, people would shove cue cards containing blatant, exaggerated endorsements for her to read! She quipped, "My gosh, I couldn't continue reading them!" The megastar is human, after all.

Reservations

Despite early reservations, we were glad we hopped on the Kiko Karavan to interview Sharon before she leaves for Europe to shoot her movie about caregivers with Chito Roño. The trip didn't only present us with the opportunity of seeing Sharon and Kiko's unguarded, private moments away from klieg lights and cameras—we also saw megastardom at play!

The previous night, a concert had to be pushed back for two hours due to technical glitches. (In fact, two of Gary Valenciano's songs had to be sung twice, because the player stopped halfway through Gary and son Gabriel's jaw-dropping terpsichorean showdown—and their moves and grooves were amazingly different every time!

But, when Sharon finally took the microphone to sing "Kahit Konting Pagtingin," the crowd went crazy! They sang with her and loved her newfound ability at self-deprecation. As she performed, Frankie and Miel were playing onstage in the background—the latter refusing to exit when her nanny would pick her up. At one point, as Frankie was demonstrating her acrobatic skills to the crowd, Sharon wryly commented, "*Sige, anak, mag*-tumbling *ka pa, magtrabaho tayo*!"—which brought the house down!

Kiko's no-frills ways have always impressed us. Obviously, he's not the cloying, *magkumpare-tayo* type of politician. He also possesses his wife's ability to remember names and faces.

How has married life been? Are you still adjusting? Has KC fully adjusted? Sharon admits there were bumps along the way, but she is surprised at how easy it has become. The great wife and mother shares: "Surprisingly, adjusting to married life was not as hard as I'd imagined it would be. In fact, I think it was easier than adjusting to the boyfriend-girlfriend relationship. One of the reasons is, I believe our having done most of the 'adjusting-to-each-other' phase before we got married helped us.

Best and worst sides

"Because the wedding had been delayed by more than a year, we had enough time to see each other's best and worst sides. So, oddly enough, we were like an old couple finally settling down. It felt so natural to be married to him—it was immediately comfortable! Except for the fact that now I had so many brothers and sisters, and another set of parents! *Na*-culture shock *ako*!

"As far as KC was concerned, I had lots of help and love from Kiko. We had to 'walk' her through the new set-up. I was more concerned about my eldest daughter's feelings about the whole process of her fitting into our new family. For many years, it was just the two of us!

"When she became an adult, she told me that, then, she felt kind of 'lost.' All of a sudden, she couldn't go with her Mama, who was leaving for her 'honeymoon' with this new person she had herself started calling 'Dad' when no one asked her to. Kiko was always loving towards her, but suddenly, he now lived with us! Then, she could no longer sleep alone with me *na* like in all the years before. Looking back, *naiiyak ako*, because I can only imagine what she could have been going through.

Changes

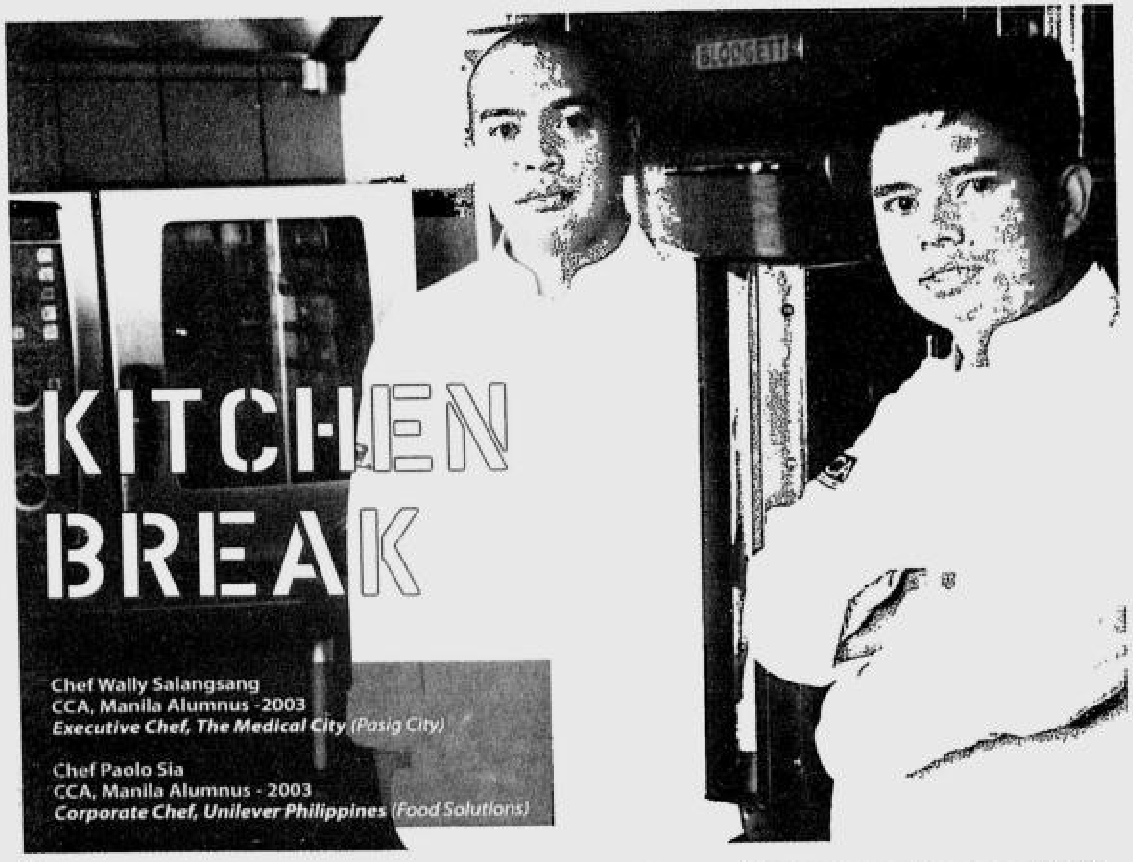
"KC had turned 11 years old just three weeks before Kiko and I got married. She needed more help *pala* in adjusting, and I wasn't aware of it! Plus, I was working all the time ('Madrasta' took about six months to complete), and had an unbelievably full schedule. The changes were *sabay-sabay* for all of us.

"Then, we left for Boston, where we had to adjust to living without our household help and the constant presence of our families and friends. It was a total turnaround in lifestyle! All of a sudden, we were anonymous. We each had to do our own thing, so we had to learn how to schedule trips and errands.

"But, that lengthy stay in Boston was one of the best times of our lives. I still get teary-eyed when I sit down and think about our days there. The kind of people we truly were was on display 24/7, *kasi* we didn't have our usual 'public' to face. We weren't being judged for every move we made.

"I picked up KC from school once in a while. Not as often as I wanted to, *kasi nakakahiya ito pero totoo!* I couldn't parallel-park. Up to this day, I still can't! *(laughs)*"

Well, nobody's perfect!



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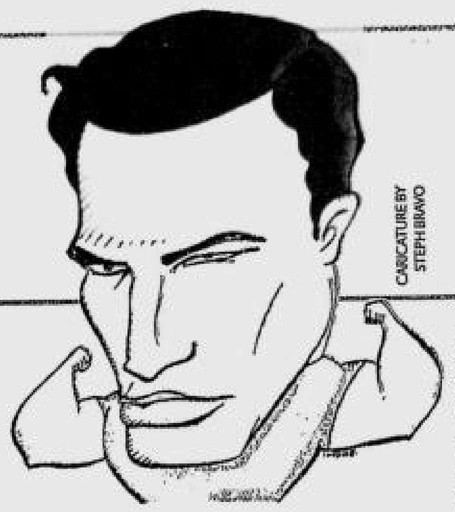

BRANDO. Still mesmerizes with his range and raw emotion.

Brando documentary examines the actor's actor

A NEW DOCUMENTARY ABOUT Marlon Brando shows he still mesmerizes fans who remember his range and raw emotion during a stunning career that saw him evolve from sex symbol to political activist to obese recluse.

"Brando," which premiered at New York's Tribeca Film Festival, argues that the actor remains the standard against whom actors are measured three years after his death and 60 years after he wowed Broadway with his performance in "A Streetcar Named Desire."

The festival was created by Brando's protege Robert De Niro, and is attended by experts familiar with Brando's work.

Humorous clips

Yet, the audience at the recent two-hour and 45-minute screening howled with laughter at the humorous clips from Brando's most famous films and sat in stunned silence through the more poignant parts, such as his "I could have been a contender" scene from 1954's "On the Waterfront."

Producer Leslie Greif, who created the documentary along with writer Mimi Freedman, said the word "icon" was overused but nonetheless apt for Brando.

"That's what Marlon Brando is and was—because he was the first! He was an actor who stripped down, became raw," Greif said in an interview. "He wasn't afraid to take real emotion, human angst, suffering, and compassion and put them on film."

"Brando" was recently aired in two parts on cable TV.

Volatile

Cinema greats such as director Martin Scorsese and actor Al Pacino appear in the documentary, still awed by a career that includes Brando's portrayal of

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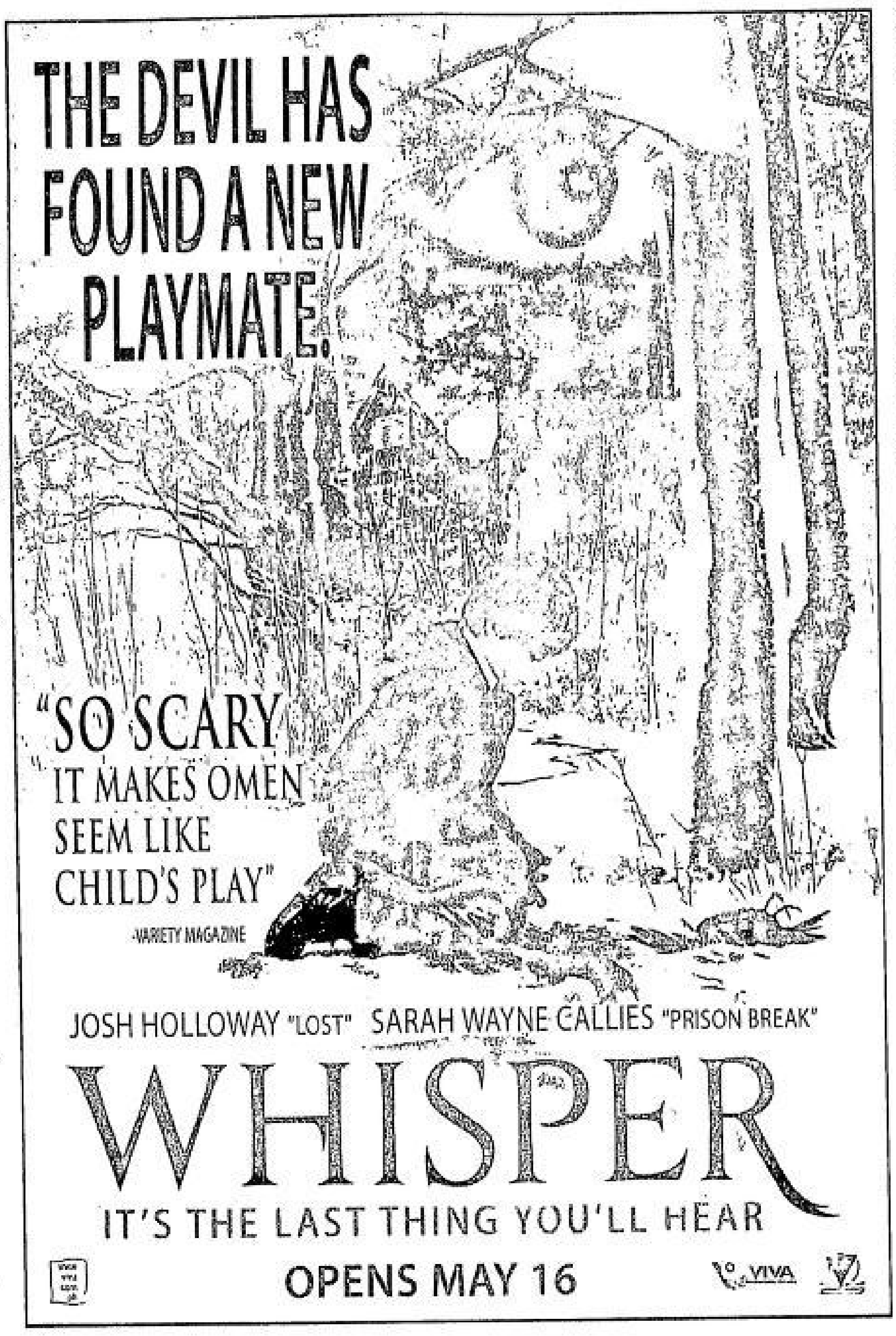
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FORUM

The down side to digital films

By Noelani Torre

LAST WEEK, WE ASKED moviegoers to comment on local digital films, which have been garnering more attention in recent years (though not really of the box-office kind). They had a lot of positive things to say, but they also had some not-so-positive (but constructively critical) opinions. Here are some of them:

"*Hindi porque't* digital film, *magaling na. Ang kagalingan ng pelikula ay nasa kuwento at sa gumagawa. Depende talaga 'yan sa istorya. Kung mag-e-eksperimento ka rin lang ng mga kulay-kulay na nakakahilo, 'wag na lang! Gumawa ka muna ng magandang kuwento.*"

–Glenn Ambrosio, 32, drummer

"*Ang mahirap sa* digital films, *hindi sila ganoon kadaling* i-distribute *sa* public. Plus, they make piracy easier."

–Raine Pimentel, 25, student

"Digital films have formed this niche of being the sole sandbox for filmmakers to play around in. Mainstream movies still follow formulaic patterns. I don't really follow the local movie scene that much, but I have yet to see mainstream movies borrowing some elements from digital indie productions.

Niche

"As a side note: I don't know how it sounds, but because of its niche, digital indie sounds redundant to me, although my instincts tell me otherwise—which brings me back to the previous argument: *Avant garde* movie-making techniques shouldn't be confined to indie/digital alone. There's got to be some form of development, because it would be sad if our best films remain underground."

–Hathem Bahjin, 23, technical support representative

Problem

"The problem with digital films is that they don't really have good visuals, which are very important. *At saka sawa na ako sa mga* camera *na tumatakbo-takbo!*"

–Arianna Choi, 19, student

"Local digital movies are in demand right now because they are relatively cheaper and quicker to produce than 35mm films. But, digital features have become so technical that they have lost the human touch."

–Oscar Yalong, 34, team leader

Experimental

"The problem with digital films is that most of the time, you can see that they have good stories, but the ways they are executed are sometimes too experimental, and the pacing is too slow. Five minutes pass by without anything really happening, so despite having a good story, it drags."

–Sarah Olivares, 24, interior designer

"*May mga napanood akong maaayos na* digital films—interesting *at bago ang* stories. *Kaya lang, minsan nagsa*-suffer *ang* quality, *nagpi*-pixelize *ang* texture *at hindi nagma*-match *sa* natural surroundings. *Ang* weird *panoorin, hindi ka sigurado kung* style *nung direktor* or *hindi lang talaga maganda ang* quality *ng paggawa dahil kulang sa* budget." *–Dino Rodriguez, 29, student*

Brando...

From page 11

sexy, volatile Stanley Kowalski in "Streetcar," and his later days as an obese recluse.

Many of the 54 celebrities, childhood friends and relatives interviewed remain fascinated by Brando's range, subtlety and raw emotion.

"He was theatrical without being theatrical," said Martin Landau.

"He releases so much stuff it's like a walking sore," Dennis Hopper added.

Regarding Brando's breakthrough performance on Broadway in 1946's "Truckline Café," Eli Wallach remarked: "We were left empty, and wounded by this actor!"

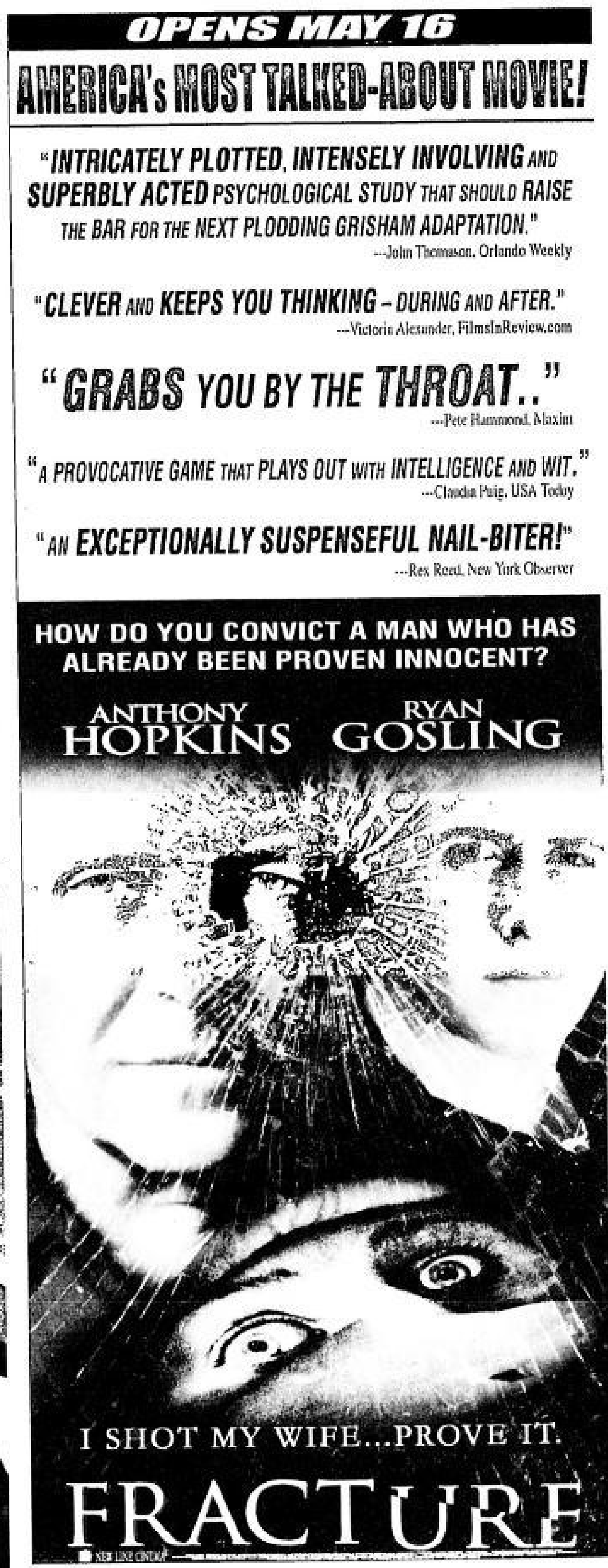
Slump

The documentary chronicles Brando's stunning early films—from "The Men" in 1950 and "On the Waterfront" in 1954 to 1979's "Apocalypse Now."

It also examines Brando's career-threatening political activism in favor of civil rights and Native Americans.

When Brando refused his best actor Oscar for "The Godfather" during the awards ceremony, Means said, "That was the finest moment for us!"

Reuters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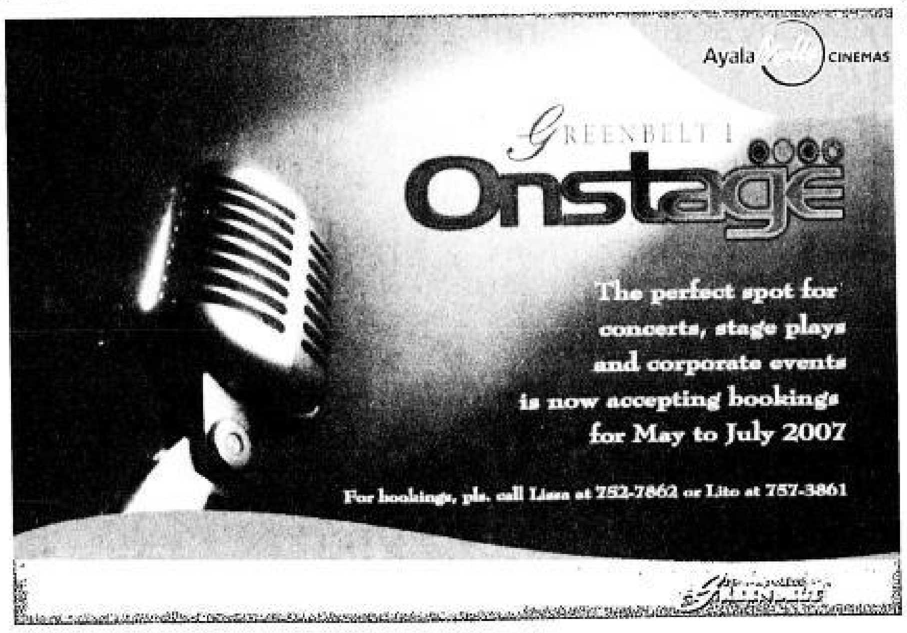
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CRUZ. Plays the murder victim's father.

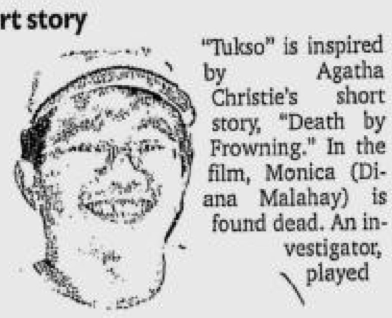
Serendipity walk leads Dennis Marasigan to 'Tukso'

By Rica Arevalo

THE SCORCHING HEAT ON THE OPEN fields near the defunct Manila Film Center at the CCP Complex can't stop director Dennis Marasigan from finishing the last part of his latest Cinemalaya entry, "Tukso."

Marasigan's set is basically a family affair. With a towel around his neck, he gives instructions to actor Sid Lucero on how to maneuver a pickup truck. Beside him is his daughter, Mara, who heads the wardrobe department and doubles up as a script continuity girl for the day. His wife, actress Irma Adlawan, is in the cast.

Short story



MARASIGAN. For him, filmmaking is a family affair.

"Tukso" is inspired by Agatha Christie's short story, "Death by Frowning." In the film, Monica (Diana Malahay) is found dead. An investigator, played by Shamaine Buencamino, examines the scene of the crime and the people close to the victim: Monica's father (Soliman Cruz), her suspected lover (Sid Lucero), a subdivision developer (Ricky Davao), a childhood friend (Ping Medina), and a widow (Irma Adlawan). Different points of view make the film a gripping whodunit. It shows how Monica's death affects the relationships of the different characters.

Working with his close-knit family is an advantage for Dennis. Mara helped co-write the script. He adds: "I think Mara has a knack for writing. There were a number of structural problems in the script, and she was the one who thought up the solutions!"

Priceless

"Whenever I write a script, there's a role for Irma. It's always an advantage to have her in my films, because what she brings with her is her vast experience as an actress. Even after shooting, our family continues to discuss the movie-and that's priceless!," the filmmaker gushes. He is also currently the artistic director of Tanghalang Pilipino.

At 44, Dennis says he has found his true calling. "Right now, I have a grand time directing plays and films. A few years ago, when I was taking a course at the Asian Institute of Management (AIM), a serendipity walk made me realize that what I really wanted to do was to direct!"

"Tukso" was mostly shot in Lipa, Batangas—with a lot of help from Vilma Santos. The digital indie will premiere at the Cinemalaya film festival in July.

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4 ANG CUTE NG INA MO
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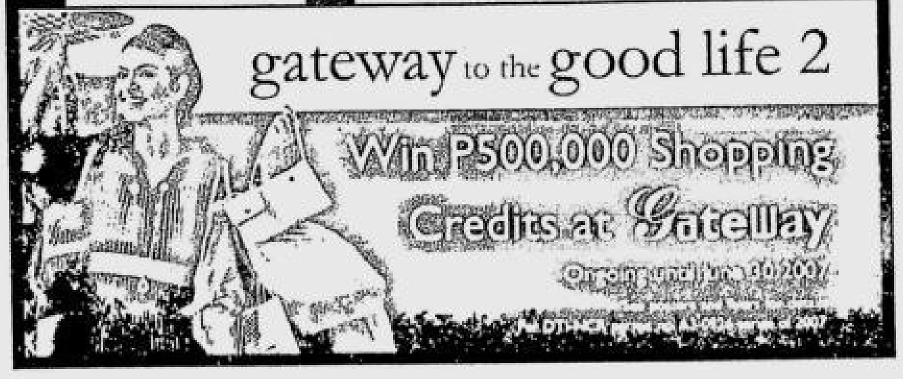

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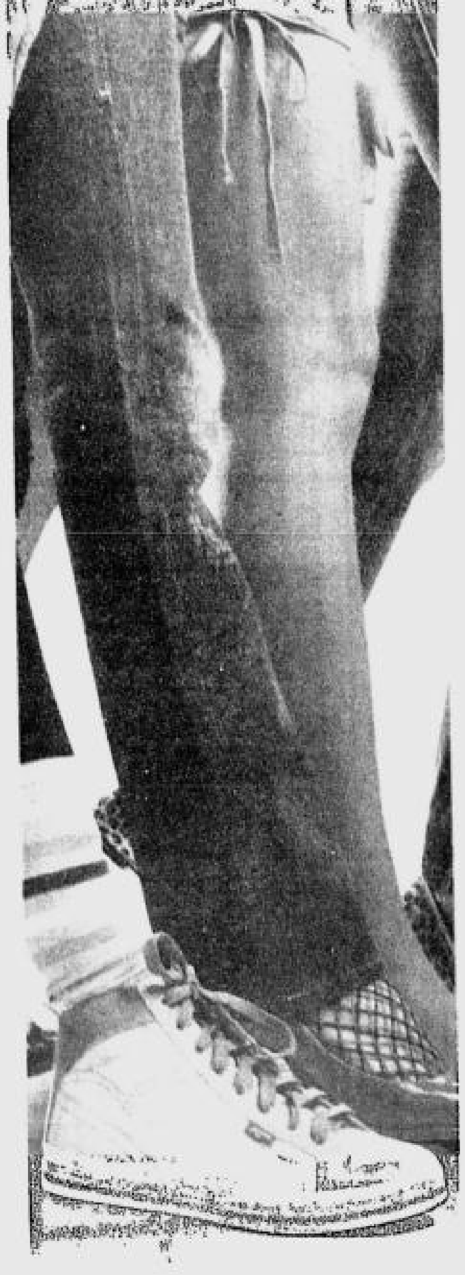

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Talent search rides on makeover bandwagon

By Remy M. Umerez

HUNDREDS OF women from diverse social brackets responded to Beverly Hills 6750's nationwide search for Miss Ugly (No More). Whoever wins must embody the ideals of an extraordinary person who believes that aesthetic beauty can affect her life in the best possible way.

David Bunevacz, president of Beverly Hills 6750, clarifies that "ugly" does not necessarily refer to stereotypical physical defects. He explains, "It's much more than that. We know how most individuals have a subjective perception of themselves. We tend to be too harsh about the way we look at ourselves.

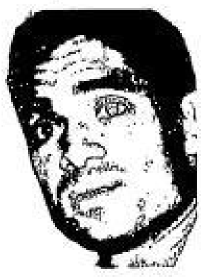
"To qualify for this search, a participant must believe that so much better is in store for her should her physical appearance be altered *via* cosmetic or aesthetic surgery and enhancement procedures. We are willing to do this for free."

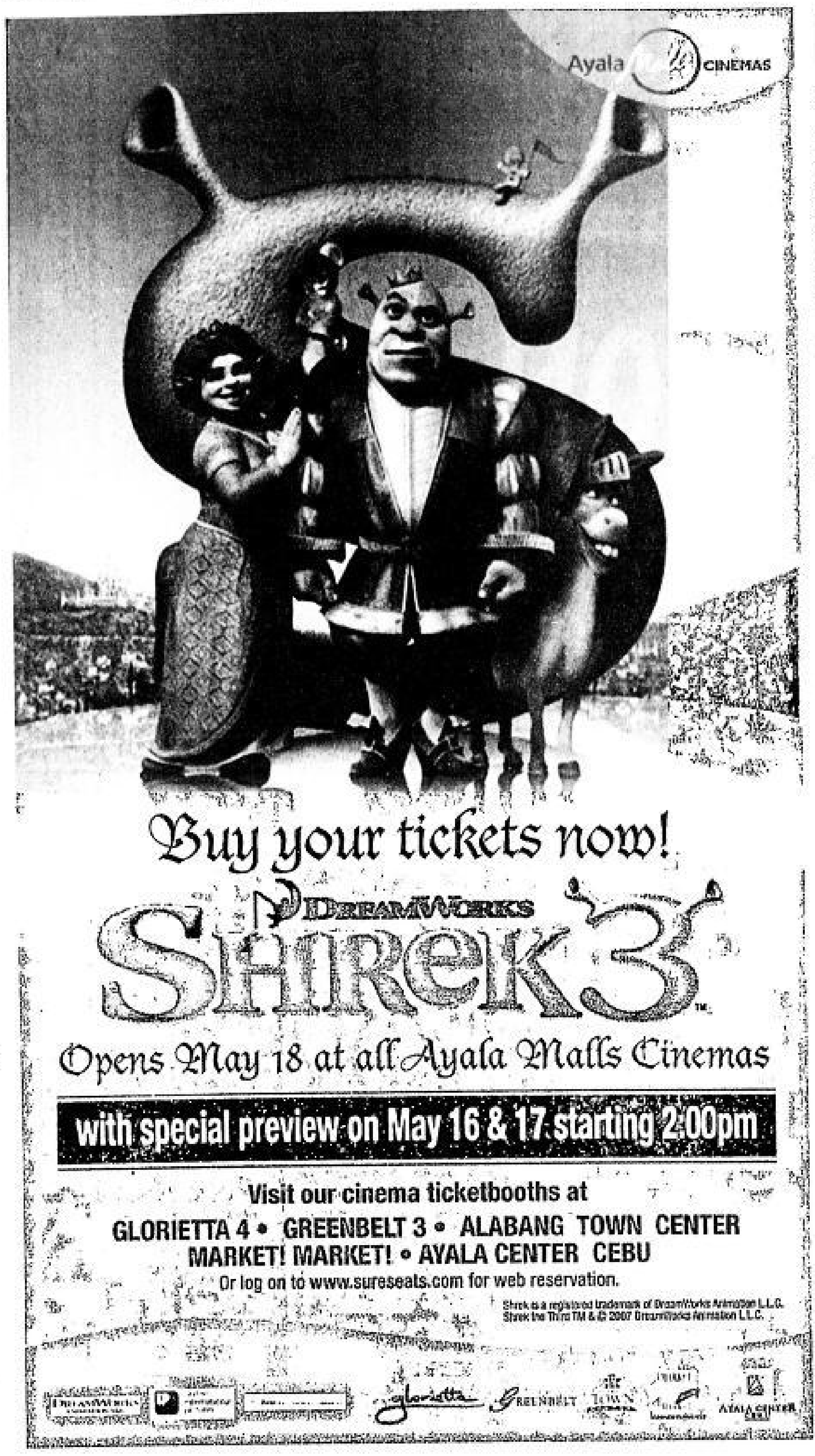
The search's 10 finalists are: Jhoanne Sibug, 26; Myla dela Paz, 29; Viva Cenon, 21; Jessielyn Lao, 20; Rica Alvarvar, 21; Jeralyn Escorel, 27; Ma. Luisa Ramos, 23; Rosebelle Tindoc, 21; Abigail Calayag, 23, and Maria Lourdes Victorioso, 31.

First step

All these women see the Miss Ugly (No More) tilt as the first step towards finding fulfillment and freedom from their insecurities in life. From the 10 finalists, three will be chosen to undergo free surgical, dental and dermatological makeovers. They will be seen on GMA-7's "Sis," which features a daily segment about the search. The three finalists will be chosen *via* text votes. The search aims to serve as an inspiration to people who aspire to look and feel better about themselves.

Beverly Hills 6750's medical director, Dr. Eduardo Santos adds: "We are committed to excellence—that's what the candidates can expect from us!"


BUNEVACZ. "'Ugly' doesn't necessarily refer to physical defects."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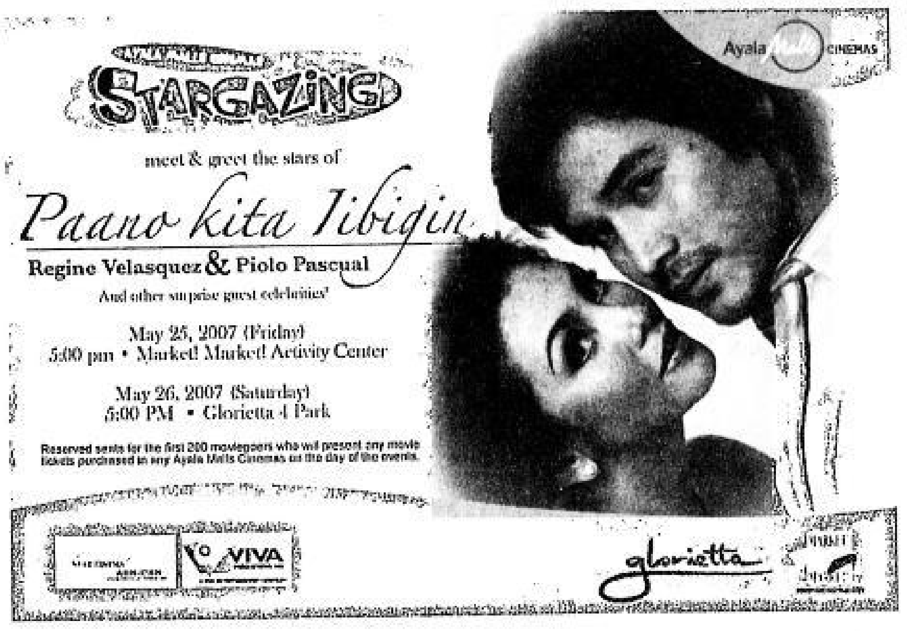
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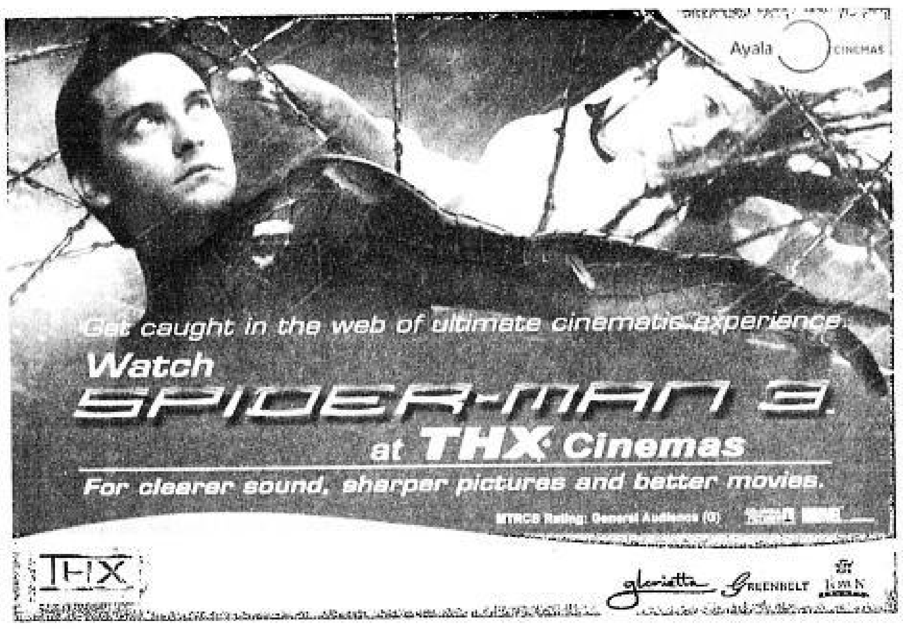
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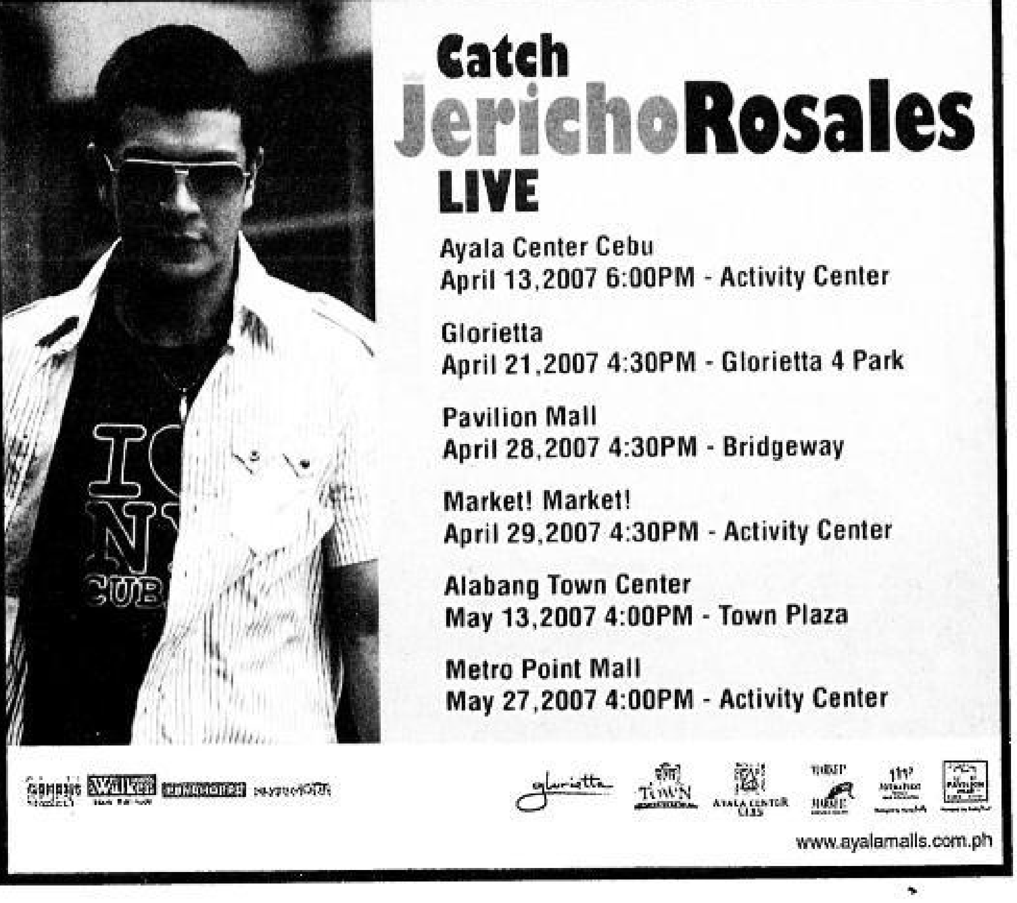
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DIRECTOR'S CUT

Dante Mendoza takes the road less traveled

By Ronald G. Mangubat

MENDOZA. Lines up a shot with his production staffers.

MALE MASSEURS TRAPPED IN THE FLESH trade, three sisters trying to win their father's love, a teacher finding self-actualization with an Aeta tribe, and a foster parent making the ultimate sacrifice—these are cutting-edge themes that don't normally lead to box-office success. But, director Brillante "Dante" Mendoza is brave enough to explore these themes in his films.

After his first full-length feature, "Masahista" (The Masseur), was screened in almost 30 film festivals around the world, Mendoza vowed to take the road less travelled and create truthful and honest films.

"Making meaningful films has become an advocacy for me and my team," the 47-year-old director declares. "I'm not saying I'm never going to venture into mainstream cinema's usual themes—it's just that, at this point in my career, this is really what I enjoy doing!"

Sexy flicks

A true-blooded Kapampangan, Mendoza's film career started at Robbie Tan's Seiko Films in the early '80s, when he worked as a production designer on some of the production outfit's sexy flicks. Later, he also worked for Chito Roño, Celso Ad. Castillo and Peque Gallaga. He then freelanced for top advertising agencies—until the call to direct films beckoned.

Recently, Dante finished his fourth film, "Foster Child," which reunites him with producer Robbie Tan. The movie, starring Cherry Pie Picache and Jiro Manio, has been accepted for exhibition at the prestigious Cannes Film Festival later this month—quite a feat for someone who thought he would merely retire as a production designer in advertising.

"I was happy with my work in advertising," he muses. "I didn't know I would find more fulfillment making films." Excerpts from our interview:

How does it feel that "Foster Child" made it to Cannes?

I'm very happy, of course. People from the Film Development Council will be leaving for Cannes on the 16th, and I'm leaving on the 19th.

Tell us about your film.

Foster parenting is not so much explored here, so we decided to tell a story about adopted children and their foster parents. The film talks about unconditional love. If we had this kind of love in us, the world would be a better place.

Unanimous praise

Cherry Pie Picache received unanimous praise for her performance in "Kaleldo." How did you coach her?

You should see Cherry Pie in "Foster Child"—she's also brilliant in the movie! She's an intelligent actress, she has an open mind. Her character in "Kaleldo" was based on my niece, so it was easier to explain things to her. *Iba syempre 'pag* true-to-life.

"Kaleldo" used visual metaphors—from the elements to changes of the season. Was that part of the script?

Not really. While we were editing the first cut, I had a feeling the movie needed something else for it to work—so I decided to use those elements to make its story come to life.

How would you describe yourself as a director?

I'm not a technical director. Sometimes, I only shoot with available light. But, I rely so much on my staff and my actors. I prepare. I know the characters very well, and how they're supposed to behave.

Temper

Do you have an artist's temper?

No, I'm very cool. But, once I become quiet, my staff already knows that something's wrong. (Laughs)

What phase of filmmaking do you enjoy most?

The brainstorming and scripting phases. *Nahi-high ako dun.* We do a lot of research before we start principal photography.

Did your being a production designer help you as a director?

Definitely. Designing is something that can't be taken away from me.

What other projects do you have in the pipeline?

I'm shooting "Tirador" now. It's about the small-time snatchers in Quiapo. And there's another one about a battered wife, and another project about two grandmothers—we're thinking of casting Anita Linda and Mona Lisa.

Budgetary constraints

If you didn't have budgetary constraints, what films would you want to make?

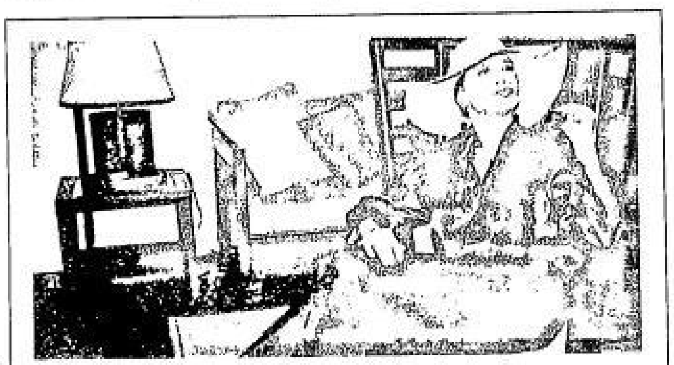
I'd still make the same edgy, truthful and honest movies. I don't want to be pampered too much.

You finance most of your films. Do you have investors?

Yes. *Naku, maraming* willing *mag*-invest-as long as you can make them believe in the project. Some of them don't even expect anything in return. I get turned off when producers ask me about box-office returns.

What do your movies reveal about you as a person?

They reveal a lot! I think I am slowly becoming my films (laughs). I need to practice a lot of restraint in order not to reveal too much of myself in my movies—they're too confessional! But, you will also notice that my films are not preachy—I don't judge people.



MARQUEZ. With her as your model, shooting is a breeze.

A taste of summer at LRI

STREET SMART

Mandy Navasero

MELANIE MARquez was as beautiful as ever when she posed for me to help publicize the summer sale at the LRI Business Plaza. She agreed to do the day-long shoot after I photographed her for the Placenta soap and lotion ad.

In one sequence, Melanie wore a lovely summer hat as if she were paying homage to the sun and sea. For this concept, shooting indoors was a real challenge, but with Melanie as the model, it was a breeze!

If you have enough space in your residence, you can get a painter to do a mural in your living room. Accentuate the atmosphere with furniture fashioned from bamboo, rattan or wood.

Platter

Feast on seafood served on a fish-shaped platter. Quench your thirst with fresh *buko* or cold fruit juice. Read under the glow of a Capiz lampshade. And rest your head on hand-embroidered *piña* pillows.

For furniture and furnishing needs that offer a taste of summer, drop by the LRI Business Plaza at 210 Nicanor Garcia st., Bel-Air II, Makati City. A homeowner's haven and an interior designer's paradise, LRI features over 30 manufacturers, exporters and distributors of home accessories. Call 895-1772.

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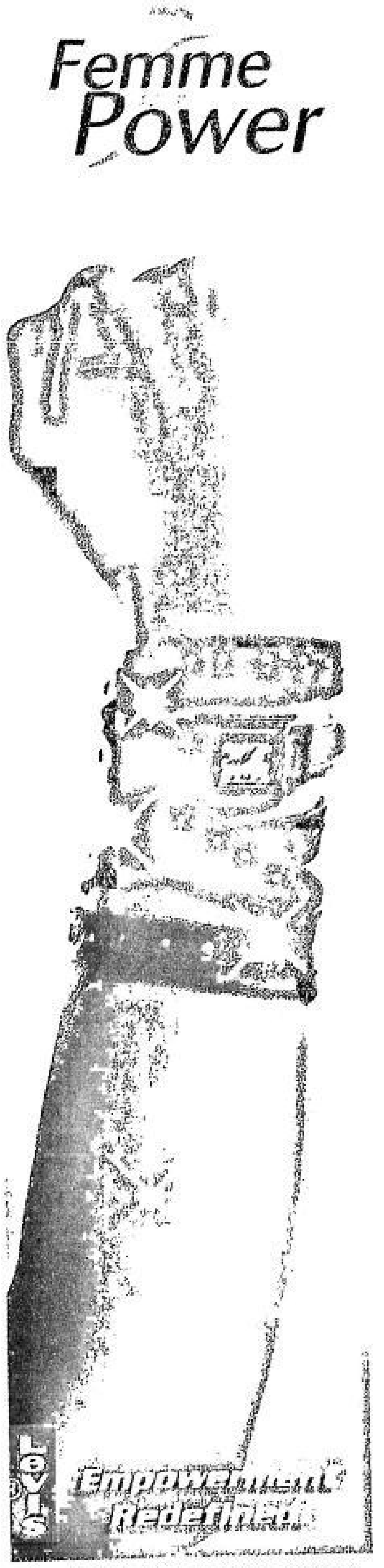
For those interested in joining the Cebu Photo Safari next month, email mandynavasero@yahoo.com, or call 899-1767.

Levi's Girls



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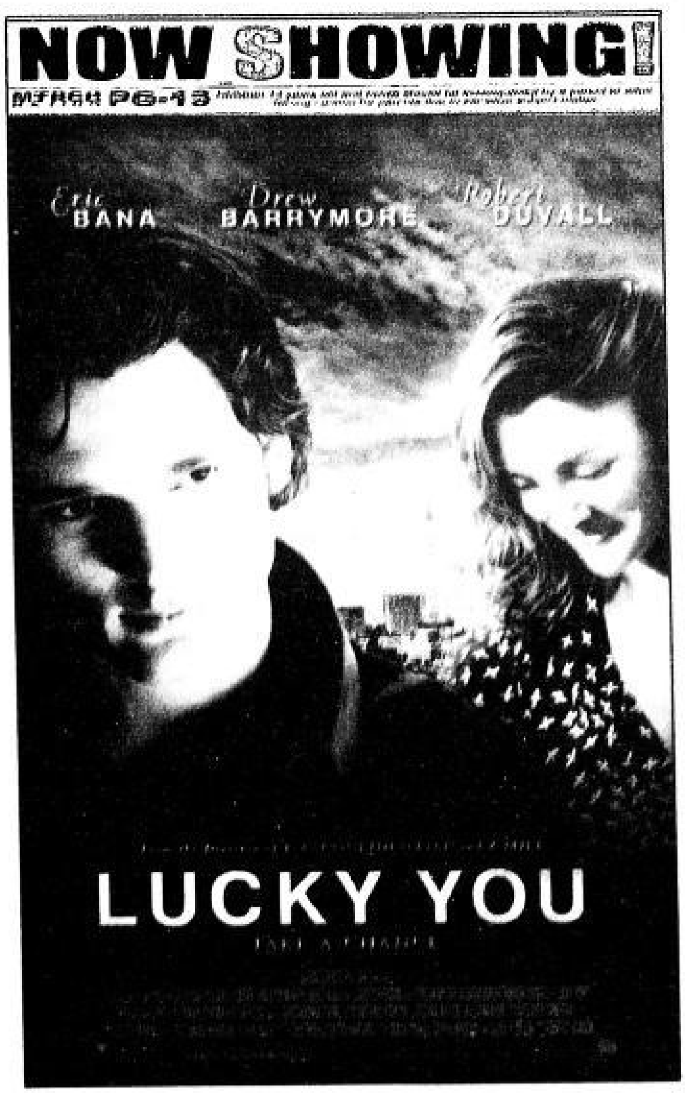

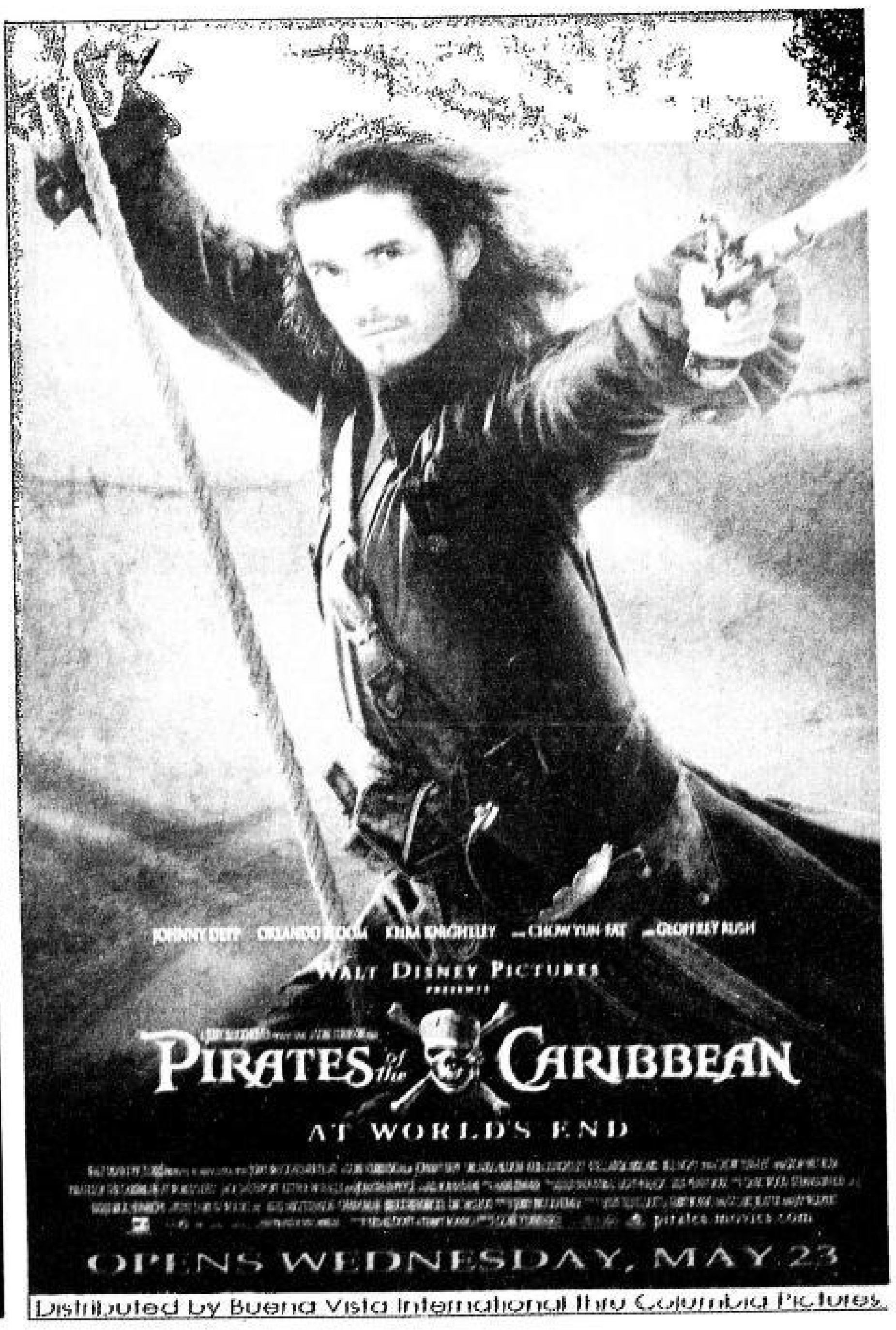

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ELEKSYON 2007

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MAY 14, MONDAY

GMA

5:00 AM-12:00 NN	ELEKSYON 2007
12:00 NN-2:30 PM	EAT BULAGA
2:30 PM-6:30 PM	ELEKSYON 2007
6:30 PM-8:00 PM	24 ORAS
8:00 PM-11:55 PM	ASIAN TREASURES* SUPER TWINS* LUPIN* JUMONG* WHO'S YOUR DADDY NOW?*
11:55 PM	SAKSI

*with hourly GMA FLASH REPORTS

QTV

8:00 AM-12:00 NN	HAPINAS KIDDIE FUN BOX ANASTASIA CAMILA
12:00 NN-1:00 PM	BALITANGHALI
1:00 PM-2:30 PM	ELEKSYON 2007
2:30PM-8:00PM	BURNING HEAVEN THE SLAYERS BURST ANGEL ROCKMAN EXE MMS MOMS THE SWEET LIFE STAIRWAY TO HEAVEN
8:00 PM-9:30 PM	ELEKSYON 2007
9:30 PM-10:30 PM	NEWS ON Q
10:30 PM-11:55 PM	ELEKSYON 2007
11:55 PM-12:45AM	OVERSEAS FILIPINO WITNESS LEGAL FORUM

MAY 15, TUESDAY

GMA

12:30 AM-12:00 NN	ELEKSYON 2007
12:00 NN onwards	Regular Programming

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